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THE SOLUTION  
OF THE  
GERMAN PROBLEM

“The German question is the most somber,  
the most complicated, the most comprehensive problem of all recent history.”

*Constantin Frantz* (1866)

# THE SOLUTION OF THE GERMAN PROBLEM

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## FOREWORD

It is only too understandable that the seed of hatred the Germans have sown under their National Socialist leadership should now shoot up, though it must be clear to anyone who thinks of the future that the world cannot indefinitely continue in the present state of passionate feeling. Once our initial anger has abated we shall be driven, if ever the fatal process is to be ended, to ask ourselves quietly how it could happen that in a great civilized nation all the forces of evil should be let loose, and what now is the just and sensible way of treating the Germans. The answers to those questions, with justice to their highly complicated character, and to the need for laying bare the historical and psychological roots of National Socialism, no longer brook delay.

The question to which we have thus to find an answer is more than a mere question of National Socialism. It is the German Question, with which generations have been concerned in the past, and which has now faced the world in its latest and acutest form in the rise and the collapse of National Socialism. It is the enigma that the great nation in the center of Europe has more and more become since Bismarck.

It is not likely that anyone will be prepared to boast of the possession of a completely satisfactory answer, and quite certainly nobody is entitled to claim sole possession of the *true* answer. The German question has many aspects, of which one will be seen more clearly by some and another by others with, in each case, quite possibly, vagueness in regard to other aspects or a complete misconception of them. Everyone should be ready



## FOREWORD

to supply an objective view, and every honest and informed contribution deserves to be welcomed.

Much depends upon the distance from which the German problem is considered, and I think there is an optimum distance, not too little and not too great. Closest to the problem is the German living among his fellow countrymen. If he is capable at all of forming any sort of objective judgment, there are many things he will know better than the rest of us, and he will be able to correct not a few misjudgments; but he is not far enough away to be able, with the best of good will, himself to gain a comprehensive view of the whole problem of his nation. "He who only knows his own country," said Lichtenberg, "does not really know even that."

The maximum distance, of course, is that of the foreigner. He has a sharp eye for some things the German misses, and he is able to consider the problem with the outsider's freedom from much that obscures or distorts the closer view; but he has to purchase this advantage with the disadvantage of the lack of a particularly important source of illumination—self-questioning. Between these two points of view, not too close and not too far, stands the man who has lived long enough as a German among Germans to enjoy the German's advantages, and long enough abroad to be able to enjoy the advantages of the foreign observer. He must, of course, take care to avoid two sources of error—that of the sentimental advocate, filled with nostalgia for the fields and woods of his youth, the advocate of men to whom he has become a stranger; and that of the renegade who tries to conceal his origin by wild outbursts of hatred. I have done my best, but I am myself well aware how little that is. I have tried to follow the example of the physician who examines a patient with scientific impartiality, whether he finds him attractive or not. Let us not forget that the patient at present in question has been suffering from a highly infectious disease.

While the main conclusions of this book may be considered as the fruits of the experiences and the studies of a lifetime, and while some parts of it had already been written during the war, it was finished in the spring of 1945—in a race with the

breath-taking events of those months that quickly led the Allies into the heart of Germany. After French and Italian editions, George Allen & Unwin in London published an English translation based principally on the second edition of the Swiss original. In the present American edition the book has been thoroughly overhauled in order to bring it up to date in every respect. While much new material has been added throughout, the last part on the solution of the German problem has been entirely rewritten.

What has been said in this last part on the present situation has been written before the Moscow conference that began in March 1947. Now after the complete futility of this conference has been revealed, there is nothing I feel compelled to add, except two remarks. First, I want to repeat with all possible emphasis that the plan that I present (and that I have been urging for two years now) would be entirely misunderstood if it were taken as a recommendation to leave eastern Germany (or all other territories of eastern Europe, as they are all now more or less in the same situation) to the Russians and to recognize a Russian sphere of influence in that part of Europe. *It is not a plan of retreat but of rally*, and it must be frankly presented as such to the Germans if it is to gain their consent and to assure their indispensable co-operation. There is great danger, however, that it might become a retreat instead of a rally, and help the Russians to win the German game rather than to lose it, if the separation from eastern Germany that has now become a palpable fact were passively accepted by the western Allies as something the Russians imposed on them. That brings me to the second point. It was fairly obvious that at the Moscow conference the Russians could not agree to any plan that reflected the determined will of the western Allies to remain masters in their own German zones. Since also the western Allies could not agree to any plan that reflected the determined will of the Russians to remain masters in their own zone, no compromise was possible and none will be possible in the future. This and not the disagreement about the reparations (where a compromise is at least conceivable) has been the real reason for the failure of

the Moscow conference. It is to be presumed, however, that the Russians, in not even going to the trouble of saving at least some planks of the wreck of the conference, acted in the hope that time will work for them. They are evidently banking on the chance that the western Allies are still afraid to pay the Russians back in their own coin; that therefore no decisive steps will be taken in the political and economic integration of the western zones and in economic reform, so that in November, when a conference will again be held, the economic outlook in Germany will be blacker than ever (and the chances of the Kremlin brighter than ever); that there will be only whining over the Moscow failure combined with touching appeals to the Russians to become nice and reasonable; that in the great struggle about the German soul all the daring and skill will be left to the Russian propaganda, which will appeal to the Germans in the double name of national union and social revolution; that the Communists—who, according to the recent elections, are already almost the strongest party in the industrial heart of western Germany—will gain ground steadily until what is still possible today for the western Allies will be impossible in November. It is up to the western Allies, most of all to the strongest of them, the United States, to crush these evident hopes of the Russians.

I want to express my cordial thanks to Professor Hans Kohn of Smith College and to Mr. Klaus Dohrn for their most gratifying endeavors in bringing about this edition and for their numerous and most helpful suggestions for improving a book that, because of its most intricate subject, can at best never be more than an approximation of the truth.

I have translated the final two chapters and various insertions in the rest of the book myself, so responsibility for their style as well as for their content is mine and should not be attributed to Mr. Dickes, who translated the rest of the work.

WILHELM RÖPKE

*Geneva, May 1947*

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# THE TRAGEDY OF A GREAT NATION

THE dictum placed as a motto in front of this book came in 1866 from the pen of a far-seeing and unbending opponent of Bismarck. In that same fateful year of German and European history, Ludwig Bamberger, the eminent German liberal and economist, wrote to his friend von Stauffenberg, after a fresh meeting with an old comrade of the revolution of 1848, Carl Schurz, who later became a Senator and Secretary of the Interior of the United States: "I have greatly enjoyed meeting Schurz. That is what we could become if we were not stuck in a dog-kennel."<sup>1</sup> Almost eighty years later, Roosevelt, President of the country to which Carl Schurz, like so many others of the best Germans, had rendered inestimable service after 1848, spoke of the Germans as the "tragic nation."

No one, indeed, who studies the thousand years of the Germans' history from Otto I down to Adolf Hitler, and who in our day has witnessed their physical, political, and moral suicide, can resist the feeling of being present at a tragedy such as the history of the world has never before seen, a true tragedy in which guilt and destiny have been interlinked. Other nations have known good and evil fortune, but when in all their political history have the Germans experienced genuine and lasting success in anything? Temperament, geographical situation, and historical inheritance have set difficulties enough in their path, but on top of that, all conceivable circumstances seem to have conspired again and again, whenever the Germans seemed at last to be reaching sound and stable conditions, to wreck the prospect at the very moment of approaching realization—be it the tragic

<sup>1</sup> Erich Eyck, *Bismarck* (London: George Allen & Unwin).

cancer of the larynx that struck down Friedrich III in 1888, or the fateful reconstruction of the President's palace in the summer of 1932. That building operation brought Hindenburg to East Prussia, and so directly under the influence of the *Junkers* then menaced by the *Osthilfe* scandal. Thus is prepared the way for his acceptance of Hitler.

What strength, what inspiration has proceeded from the central country of our continent in those thousand years! What talent, what honest and indeed desperate endeavor to gain the mastery over fate! And again and again the Germans' effort has been fruitless—so much so that the whole history of Germany until 1866 (the year in which Germany ceased to exist, making way for a Greater Prussia) may be described as simply a history of frustration. Nowhere is it more natural than on Swiss soil to note how close together lie here the two opposite examples of a federalization that succeeded and one that failed throughout a thousand years—Switzerland and Germany, two countries bearing much the same relation to each other as two animals subjected to biological experiment, one of them receiving a particular vitamin and the other not.<sup>2</sup> An obvious question, however, is whether there is not a danger that the ultimate consequences of the German fiasco might have very undesirable repercussions on the success of any tolerably sound political, economic, social, and spiritual structure in other countries. What that implies will be considered later.

Let us hold on to the fact that the Germans, who today have become *odium generis humani*, are a people with whom fate has played a more evil game than with any other—fate and their own failure. What is worst of all is that this unique history—above all in its last and most fateful hundred years—has left deep traces in the German character that have made the Germans one of the most complex and problematic and, in the end, one of the most hated of all nations. Thus, on top of all their other troubles, they have to bear the dislike of the rest of the world, which still further worsens their situation. In this, as in

<sup>2</sup> For the source of the structure of the Swiss state, see now William E. Rappard, *Cinq siècles de sécurité collective* (1291-1798), Geneva and Paris, 1945.

so many other things, they strikingly resemble another tragic nation of world history, the Jews; this has been noted again and again by acute observers, and is probably the final cause of the quite peculiar relation between Germans and Jews, which departs from normal to fall now into hatred and now into liking.

Since we have touched on this exceedingly complicated relationship between Germans and Jews, let us recall that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries any violent anti-Semitism as it was then endemic in most countries of eastern and southeastern Europe was practically unknown in Germany, and that Jews were feeling much at home in Germany, perhaps more so than in most neighboring countries. Their influence on German cultural and economic life was at that time extraordinary, and some of the best friends of Kaiser Wilhelm II were Jews. Again and again during the First World War there were attempts in the Allied countries to account for Germany's less attractive traits as due not only to a "Prussification" but also to a "Judification." It is significant that the German philosopher Max Scheler when publishing in 1917 an interesting book on *The Causes of the Hatred of the Germans* had been driven to deal precisely with that charge.

There is no intention here of making an urgent appeal for sympathy, still less of making any absurd attempt to alter in the least the world's judgment concerning the unspeakable ideas and ideologies that carried Germany into the deepest abyss of her history and at the same time brought infinite misery upon all Europe. What we are concerned with, however, is one of the leading countries of the West, a country that has given mankind some of its greatest minds, an industrious and reliable nation, talented and endowed with not a few virtues, a nation whose culture is rooted in the same soil as that of the other European nations, whose language is one of our own languages, and of whose nationals we esteem many and love some. At the same time, we are concerned with a nation whose name, once standing so high, is today linked with atrocities that have turned a Brueghel vision of Hell into appalling reality.

How in the world has this nation come to such an end? We



wrote of "suicide," and even in the case of the German nation, in spite of the terrible things it had to suffer, it is to be hoped that the term will remain no more than a metaphor; but how can this nation regain health and find the way back to its true self and to community with the West? What should be our own attitude, the attitude of the world outside Germany, to this nation after its terrible fall, what should be the attitude of those who but a little while ago trembled in face of its leaders and who were compelled, in infinite rage, to submit to witness the submission of others to the worst things the mind of man can conceive? These are the questions to which we have to find a satisfactory answer, difficult as the task may be. They are questions that torment us so that we could say with Heinrich Heine:

*Denk' ich an Deutschland in der Nacht,  
Dann bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht—*

"If in the night I think of Germany, I am robbed of my sleep."

This German problem can scarcely be exceeded either in difficulty or in importance by any other problem of our day. Whether we will or no, the future of Europe depends on our succeeding at last after this war in attaining what three past generations have failed to attain, the peaceful reintegration of Germany in Europe, and with it the protection of Europe against Germany and of Germany against herself. We know that with a sick Germany in her midst Europe is doomed to final ruin, and nobody can ignore the fact that Europe cannot do without Germany if she is to maintain her place in the world.

The study, however, of the German problem, conceived in a broad historical and sociological sense, is scarcely less revealing in another respect. Not until we have grasped the fateful development of Germany since 1866 do we reach a full understanding of many symptoms of decay in the social, economic, and intellectual life of the West. Not until then is the full significance realized of the dangerous currents that are due, almost everywhere, either directly to German influence or to conditions similar to the German conditions. The investigation

of the German problem means the study of the social and cultural crisis of the West in the special case of a nation that has fallen a victim to it in an almost unique way, and has become one of the worst sources of infection of the rest of the world. It means the setting up of a warning beacon for all; but our situation would be indeed desperate if we were to do this without any hope—hope for Germany as well as for the rest of the world.



PART I

THE THIRD REICH AND  
ITS END

For despotically ruled states there is no  
salvation except in downfall.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, "*Ueber Völker-  
wanderung, Kreuzzüge und Mittelalter*"



## THE GERMANS AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

### THE WORLD'S SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY

**W**ITH horror and disgust, contempt and indignation, all that can still be called the civilized world turned away from that regime which had arisen out of the deepest mire of the human soul and, with its mixture of sentimentality and utter brutality, of lying and cool calculation, had set up one of the most loathsome tyrannies of all times. To what extent are the Germans as a whole responsible for it? Or was National Socialism simply the quintessence of all the evil and menacing elements that had slumbered through all time in the German people?

That is the first question we must ask ourselves. But here we enter a field so overgrown with passions, suspicions, and misunderstandings that the author has no alternative but to begin with a few personal details. He was himself born in Germany, in Hanover, and he declares that the National Socialists became the object of the great and inextinguishable hatred of his life. Fifteen years ago he went to war, so to speak, against them, and from then on he waged that war at the risk of life and health and livelihood. They have destroyed his mother country, dishonored her, dragged her through the mire, and covered her with the slime of their lies, and they have brought the whole of our Western civilization to such a pass that we do not yet know whether it will recover. When all was lost they continued, with an iron grip on the throat of the German nation, senselessly to pursue the war in order to prolong their own wretched lives for a few weeks or months, thus adding infinitely to the destruc-

tion and chaos. They slaughtered millions like cattle, and robbed other millions of those they most loved. Their stupidity was exceeded only by their malice, their loquacity by their ignorance, their swaggering by their secret fear. And to this day there is no visible end to the evil they have wrought since they opened the gates of the world for the spirit of evil, and gave free rein to the destructive forces of nihilism and totalitarianism.

And all this could be clearly foreseen long before Nazism began to unmask to the world—so far as anyone took the trouble to pay attention to the words and deeds of the Nazis, and so far as anyone had sufficient moral sense to react to them with the disgust of a civilized being. Those who had ears to hear and eyes to see could not but know what they had to expect from these persons with their greed for power. They had but to look at the men's faces, plainly marked with obstinate stupidity, they had but to hear their speeches and read their writings and note their deeds, which even before 1933 had reduced to terror a nation already rendered helpless. Nazism was a mixture of the ebullient feelings and the uncontrolled energies of boy scouts with cynicism, opportunism, brutality, mendacity, with hatred, envy, ambition, faithlessness, and intrigue, and with lewd sexuality. It was a barbarism, the barbarism not of immaturity but of rottenness, a barbarism the more repulsive since it was deliberate, studied, and pseudo-scientifically formulated. It was a hysterical orgy of decadent irresponsible intellectuals, who whipped up the masses with their phrases and turned their heads with their distortions of a language that had once been that of Lessing, Goethe, and Schopenhauer.

Amid all this there was a great deal of what may fairly be called honest idealism, among followers whose heads had been turned but not their hearts. These followers were certainly difficult to understand, but there was some excuse for them so long as the behavior of the Nazis was calculated to deceive the innocent. Then came the moment after which no excuse was possible any longer. The last opportunity for these straying souls to find their way back to civilization came in August 1932. In that month Storm Troopers were on trial in Potempa, in Upper Si-

lesia, for the bestial murder of political opponents. When they were sentenced to death, Hitler shamelessly sent them a telegram of sympathy and encouragement. This act of his aroused a wave of indignation in Germany, and any who after that remained in a party led by such a man, or later felt no compunction in making him chancellor of the Reich, pronounced their own condemnation. At the least there should be no place for them in the future in the public life of their nation.

For foreign opinion there was still some excuse for a time. The foreigner had the means of learning all the things that must be familiar to every German; but as a rule, at least until the commencement of the Third Reich, the foreigner had not the shock of direct observation. The foreigner was still less likely than the German to take the trouble to read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, a propaganda document that was revealing alike in its contents and its illiteracy. If the foreigner had no knowledge of German, he had the opportunity of reading the book in a French or English translation, from which he could almost acquire the illusion that it was a literary product to be taken seriously, and not a mass of cheap and uncouth journalese.

But when the Nazis had wormed their way into power, and had begun to make use of their power in the manner every open-eyed observer was bound to expect, the time was quickly past for any toleration of them to be justifiable even abroad. It was well known abroad after a few weeks or months what powers of evil were at work, with the concentration camps filling and violence and illegality and falsity piled high. And now imagine the agony that we who had left our country in disgust, knowing all that must come, had to endure through six long years, finding that the world did not stir, did not *want* to know anything about us. We émigrés were received abroad with sympathy, but as political advisers we were suspect. Our motives were respected, but we were given to understand that as émigrés we simply did not count, even where we were not openly set down as agitators and warmongers. At so late a stage as in October 1938, when the policy of appeasement had reached its nadir after the shameful sacrifice of Czechoslovakia, I was



treated by an American colleague as a poor half-wit when I declared that Czechoslovakia was lost and, moreover, that Europe was heading for disaster.

As a professor at Marburg University, realizing the threatening peril, I had used every opportunity between 1930 and 1933 to combat National Socialism in speech and writing, and my freely expressed convictions had already made me unpopular enough. At the birth of the Third Reich I took a further step that procured me the honor of being placed on one of Hitler's first lists of dismissed university professors. At the end of February 1933—early in the unforgettable day on which the Reichstag building was fired by the Nazis—I had spoken at the grave of a dead colleague. I had quoted the famous phrase from Voltaire's *Candide*, "*mais il faut cultiver notre jardin*," and had praised my colleague as a gardener by nature in the broadest sense, and concluded: "And as a gardener of that sort he was probably no longer suited to the present time—the present that is proceeding to turn the garden of civilization into fallow land and to allow it to revert to the primeval jungle."

It did indeed call for no exceptional clarity of vision to recognize Nazism as a frightful barbarian invasion of the laboriously hedged garden of civilization. But why was there general blindness to this in Germany, as later in the rest of the world, and why, in both cases, were men's eyes opened only when it was too late, when Germany had suffered the catastrophe of tyranny, and the world the catastrophe of war? The main reason lay in the *weakening of the moral reflexes*. That was what prevented so many people, faced with a barbarism that in the preceding generation would have made its perpetrators utterly impossible in the civilized world, from taking up the only proper attitude of flaming and uncompromising indignation, and nipping the evil in the bud. People were blind because they were determined to be blind. But that determination in face of unprecedented barbarism proved the serious weakening of the moral sense, of which the world had already given a first sign in the case of Fascist Italy when men praised the punctuality of the trains and

the improvement of tourist travel, but forgot what that regime meant for the Italians.

Thus the failure to recognize the true features of Nazism was in the last resort a moral failure, which men sought to cover up with all sorts of theories by way of excuse, euphemism, or even justification, and with stale witticisms. *But this is a responsibility the world must share in full with the Germans.* There was certainly a good deal in this National Socialism that was anything but edifying, and certainly its victims deserved sympathy and assistance. But, on the other hand, had not Germany been given order and discipline? Were not the *Autobahnen*, the motor roads, perfect? Was not the economic and social policy of the Third Reich a thoroughly interesting experiment, perhaps worth emulating? Was it really so monstrous for the Third Reich to repudiate the limitations on its armaments (they could not be maintained forever), to claim full sovereignty over the Rhineland, to work for reunion with the Germans of Austria and perhaps even of the Sudeten, and to treat Danzig more and more openly as a German city under its rule? And was it not, moreover, performing the service of holding off from the West something still worse—bolshevism? And that financial wizard, Schacht, who cheated the foreign creditors with grinning cynicism, was he not really a genial fellow? Was it not possible, by using discretion and plenty of bribery and flattery, to make excellent deals with these new men? And was it not even possible for a socialist to learn a lot from this regime? As for its unattractive sides, would it not be enough to express indignation, or to joke about them, instead of being led into the awkward course, so incompatible with a pacifist program, of putting up resolute diplomatic and military resistance? Thousands, indeed millions of people outside Germany must admit that these bitter questions strike home.

One of these questions of ours had reference to the fact that one ground for coming to terms with Nazism was the idea that it was an efficient bulwark against bolshevism, or at least was, in comparison with bolshevism, the lesser evil. In this belief there was all too ready acceptance of the Nazi propaganda claim

that the *coup d'état* of 1933 saved Germany from a communist revolution. That theory was indeed one of the trump cards played by National Socialism against unfavorable world opinion—we know with what success. At the outset and for a long time very few realized that this was no more than casting out devils through Beelzebub, and that the differences between the Red collectivism and the Brown totalitarianism could not remove from the world the essential similarity of their principles of structure.

But since these two chief varieties of collectivism—National Socialism and communism—were rivals who very naturally fought bitterly against each other and who, as tricksters who saw through each other's methods, had every reason to be afraid of each other, neither of them missed any opportunity of turning the free opinion of the world in its favor and against the other. Each denounced the other as the thing that in truth each of them was—a tyranny. Each claimed to be what in truth neither of them was—a guardian of democracy. In fact, their ideal aim was attained if every opponent of fascism or Nazism was branded as a communist and every opponent of communism as a fascist.

It is unfortunate for the world that the two rival forms of collectivism seem largely to have attained this aim. In doing so, however, they created a confusion that facilitated the game of both. Thus they involuntarily worked into each other's hands. It was, in fact, in this way that Nazism improved its position with a considerable section of the free opinion of the world, which without communism would have been inaccessible to its approaches, while at the same time communism succeeded in winning over another section of the free opinion of the world, which, but for Nazism, would have shown more reserve and better judgment. It remains a serious fault that the world should have allowed itself to be so led astray in its judgment and its moral susceptibilities by this playing off of communism against National Socialism. How grave is this fault and how ready our times show themselves to submit to this mental and emotional confusion is shown by the fact that today we see the same un-

sureness and denseness in regard to communism. Nobody who actively defends communism or even finds excuses for it has any right to be indignant with the German people for its seduction by the Brown collectivism, and a world that today shows the same attitude to communism that it showed in the past to National Socialism, an attitude of palliation and of appeasement, if not of actual encouragement, proves to us that it is in a moral and mental condition that might have made it an accomplice in Nazism.

This play between fascism (National Socialism) and communism was facilitated by a certain interpretation of National Socialism. We refer to the idea that National Socialism, like fascism, was fundamentally simply a spurious and insincere collectivism, with the aid of which "capitalism" was trying to maintain its position in a last desperate struggle against genuine collectivism, without troubling too much about the methods of government or the ideologies to be worked off on the masses who were to be fooled. Such a theory was well adapted to make the fundamental opponents of collectivism more ready to come to terms with National Socialism, if it did not actually throw them into its arms, while winning the allegiance of the others for "true" collectivism. One side was persuaded in this way to see in National Socialism an ally in the struggle against collectivism, and the other to see in collectivism an ally against Nazism. One side thus became partisans or promoters of Nazism and the other of communism.

We may feel the latter to be less unattractive than the former, but this does not prevent the two sides from both being wrong, because the interpretation of Nazism from which both proceed is untenable. It is an altogether primitive sociological principle, although, unfortunately, propagated by Marxism, that a government is simply the executive organ of the "ruling class." "The class that in truth rules politically is the class of the rulers, with their religious, philosophic, or moral ideas, whatever these may be,"<sup>1</sup> but not a group that stands for any sort of common economic interests. It is cheap romanticism to suppose that the

<sup>1</sup> Benedetto Croce, *Orientamenti*, 2nd ed., Milan, 1934, p. 44

leaders of a state are marionettes, dancing at the ends of wires pulled by the "capitalists." The idea is completely untenable, even though there are actually "capitalists" who themselves entertain it. In Germany itself it was mainly "capitalists" who were so stupid as cynically to promote Hitler's rise to power, and later one of them, when the National Socialism he had supported had driven him into emigration, was actually simple enough to publish a book describing the wretched part he had played, instead of keeping a shamed silence. All these "capitalists" were driven long ago to the painful conclusion that Nazism was an entirely genuine collectivism, and was determined to rule by its own uncontrolled power. Thus those socialists who still adhered to the theory that National Socialism was a last desperate struggle of "monopoly capitalism" and was a pseudo-collectivism made the same mistake in their theories that the "capitalists" of the type of Fritz Thyssen had made earlier in practice. Now that that idea has been proved in practice by the "capitalists" to be a fatal error, it should be considered as disposed of also in the theories of the socialists. Needless to say, in the case of the socialists it was no more than a mistaken idea, but in the case of those "capitalists" it was at the same time a grave and inexcusable moral lapse. The socialists have our entire sympathy, but they must allow us to tell them that they were mistaken.

Thus intellectual confusion and moral obtuseness united to clear away the obstacles in the path of the Nazis—obstacles that otherwise would soon have made an end of their dominance. We who knew what Nazism meant had assumed in those critical years after the *coup d'état* of 1933 that the conclusions we had drawn must force themselves upon the whole world. We took it for granted that at the very outset the Third Reich must come to grief through the resistance of the outer world, after the internal resistance had proved inadequate. We imagined the world's reactions and power of decision to be still more or less normal, so that we could not believe that the Nazi regime would last long. We thought the object lesson the Nazis had given in Germany would be sufficient to open the eyes of the rest of the

world; the failure in Germany would increase the resolution abroad; since the battle had been lost in Germany, in the international field the determination not to lose it could not, we thought, but increase accordingly.

It had been impossible for us to make any mistake in our estimate of National Socialism; but unfortunately we were entirely mistaken in our estimate of the world outside Germany. We had not expected such inertia, indecision, and lack of unity. Indeed, time after time, from 1933 to this day the points were set wrongly with such incredibly mistaken instinct that disaster rushed upon us all like an express train. Thus we had the depressing spectacle of the representatives of foreign countries willingly shaking hands with murderers, liars, Reichstag-burners, torturers, blackmailers, sexual perverts, and such fry, hurrying to attend Nazi festivals, and taking pains to make it seem that these figures from the dregs of society were entitled to consideration. The German efforts to increase the tourist traffic fell on fruitful soil; bodies like the International Chamber of Commerce held their congresses in Germany, and not a few foreigners' arms were held out in the fascist greeting; while scarcely a soul was tactless enough to inquire about concentration camps, "People's Courts," or nocturnal outrages. Men strove to discover every possible "good side" of Nazism, regardless of the fact that such a regime could not exist at all without some "good sides." How few foreign intellectuals were able to summon up the modicum of courage needed to refuse to go on contributing to German periodicals that were closed to anti-Nazi Germans! Was there one among them who, invited in the most flattering terms to attend one of the many scientific congresses held in Germany actually after 1933, had the courage to make use of his unique opportunity, envied by his German colleagues, of speaking freely and plainly and tearing apart the web of propaganda that was spun on these occasions? How many, on the contrary, submitted to flattering and lionizing; and how many books were published abroad in praise of National Socialism—books whose authors must be wishing today that they had never been written!

*The courting of world favor by the Third Reich* was shamefully successful, and here again there was merely a repetition of what we had already witnessed in the case of Italian fascism. It was the time when an anti-Nazi German could ask himself bitterly whether one of the marks of a totalitarian state was not the advantage attaching to the possession of a foreign passport. It was discovered how well and how cheaply the foreigner could live in Germany, and with what exquisite courtesy he was then treated; and people became willing victims of the noisy propaganda carried on by the regime over all sorts of "achievements" that were by no means absent in democratic countries but about which no fuss was made there. Is it forgotten how at that very time the Olympic Games were transferred to Germany, giving the Nazis a unique opportunity of increasing their prestige among Germans and abroad, while in the country around, the Terror was raging and arms were being secretly forged against the youth of all countries—the very youth who were streaming at that time into Berlin? And will anyone claim now to have been the innocent victim of shameless deception because he could not have known what scoundrels these Nazis were? It would have been plain enough if there had not been a moral obliquity that closed men's eyes to the crimes of the regime, already amply evidenced. Men simply did not want to know, because it was inconvenient knowledge. So there was recruited in all countries the "intellectual Foreign Legion" of Nazism.

It was particularly fatal that *this spiritual and moral capitulation of the world to the Third Reich* affected the policy of all governments, though it was of vital importance to them, had they realized it, to unite with the anti-Nazi Germans against the enormous peril of Nazism, and though they would have been perfectly well able, by acting in time, to make an absolute end of it. We had to witness the responsible statesmen simply letting slip every opportunity of nipping the Third Reich in the bud. They could probably have done this with success by the simple and bloodless process of allowing the Nazis to "stew in their own juice," entirely ostracizing them diplomatically, mobilizing

world opinion against them, and reducing all relations with the Third Reich to the absolute minimum.

Not only did they do nothing, not only did they idly permit themselves to be outstripped militarily in a few years—particularly in the extremely important air arm—but the United Kingdom, for instance, actually concluded a naval agreement with the Berlin government; this agreement included the recognition of German rearmament in defiance of the Versailles Treaty, and could not fail to encourage the Nazis to proceed energetically along that path. During the first years of the regime it would have been child's play to make an end of the monstrous thing, and in all probability even in 1936 the simple mobilization of France would have sufficed to turn the treaty-breaking reoccupation of the Rhineland from a triumph into an annihilating political defeat of Hitler. When in 1938 Austria was violated, nobody stirred, and when in the autumn of that same year the same game of extortion and menace was played against Czechoslovakia, in the Munich capitulation world policy in regard to the Third Reich descended to the uttermost extreme of weakness. During the whole period countless Germans had set their last desperate hopes on a firm attitude on the part of the Great Powers, but again and again they had to witness the triumph of their hated tyrants over a spineless world. Finally, Russia too made concessions to Hitler in the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, enabling Hitler at last to let loose war and, with the support of Russian deliveries, to carry it on successfully for a considerable time. The dismal picture is completed by the sudden chorus of praise from the communists of all countries of the coalition of Nazism and communism against the "imperialist and capitalist world."

If we consider all this soberly and with scientific objectivity, we can no longer doubt that *the world-wide catastrophe of today is the gigantic price the world has to pay for its deafness to all the warning signals that prophesied with ever increasing shrillness from 1930 to 1939 the hell the satanic forces of National Socialism were to let loose, first against Germany herself and then against the rest of the world. The horrors of the*



*war correspond exactly with those that the world permitted Germany to suffer, while it actually maintained normal relations with the Nazis and organized with them international festivals and congresses.*

None are so deaf as those who are determined not to hear. The universal passivity in regard to the Third Reich was indeed the result of the paralysis produced by a spiritual and moral poisoning, and of the determination to ignore the writing on the wall in order to postpone the day of reckoning and to purchase a few years of peace and comfort, at the price of a most terrible final catastrophe. For this catastrophe the Germans have to bear the main responsibility; nevertheless, all nations have reason to beat their breasts, to confess, and to repent.

Today it seems almost incredible that the world should have been able for so long to harbor the illusion that the Nazis might treat foreign countries better than they treated their own people; its doing so is inexcusable. Today, however, it should be clear to everybody that Nazism began its march of conquest in Germany itself, that the Germans were the first victims of that barbarian invasion which poured over them from below, that they were the first to be overwhelmed by terrorism and by mass hypnosis, and that all that the occupied countries had later to endure was suffered first by the Germans themselves, including the worst fate of all, that of being impressed or seduced into becoming tools of further conquests and oppression. Germany was a sailing vessel, the worst elements of whose crew had banded together to overpower the rest, to set their own ringleader in place of the senile captain, and then to hoist amid shouts their blood-red flag with its spider-like sign of criminality and to set out on their buccaneering cruise. In the fashion of the old pirates they then proceeded to impress the crews of captured ships in their service and to make them their accomplices. The first victims of these abominable proceedings was Austria, the country with which the Nazis began their process of horizontal conquest after they had completed the vertical conquest of Germany; and also the country from which the ringleader had come with his empty "blarney."

To sum up—the leading Nazis are so far outside all human moral law that we should do them undue honor if we were to apply to them the moral standard of guilt. But we are bound to speak of guilt (which implies the conceptions of repentance, expiation, and rebirth) in the case of all those who, in their mental blindness and moral bewilderment, by their action or inaction left the way clear for those caricatures of humanity, instead of stopping them in time. This, however, is guilt that the world has to share with the Germans.

Let us illustrate this international dovetailing of responsibilities by one astounding example. One of the crudest and most unqualified indictments against the whole German people came in the summer of 1945 from the well-known Swiss psychologist Professor C. G. Jung, first in a tacitly approved interview given to the Zurich weekly *Weltwoche* and then in an article published in a Swiss monthly. Both publications amounted to this: All Germans were responsible without any exception, and any distinction between "honest" and "dishonest" Germans was "rather naïve." But who is Professor Jung? He is the same man who (when in 1933 his German colleague, the famous Professor Kretschmer, found himself unable to continue his function as the president of the German Association for Psychotherapy and as editor of the leading periodical) obligingly filled the vacancy left by his honest German colleague and accepted the Nazi invitation to take over his functions. After the *Gleichschaltung* (bringing into step) of the association and its periodical, the first number of the Nazified paper (*Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie*, December 1933) was opened by a solemn "Introduction" written by Professor Jung underlining the necessity of distinguishing thenceforward between a "Germanic and Jewish psychology," while in the same number the new *Reichsführer* of the psychotherapists, Professor M. H. Göring, pledged the members of the new Association to "Adolf Hitler's fundamental book *Mein Kampf*" and to the aim of the Association "to contribute to the work of the people's chancellor to educate the German people for a spirit of heroism and sacrifice." In order to make it perfectly clear what the obliging attitude of

Professor Jung meant, a few pages later (p. 142) the Reichsführer declares: "Thanks to the fact that Dr. C. G. Jung accepted the presidency on June 21st, 1933, it has been possible to continue the scientific activity of the Association and of its periodical." This same man speaks now of the "incredible suggestibility of the Germans" and of their "general psychological inferiority"!

Though this sad story hardly needs any comment, we emphasize the following points: (1) It was bad that, in 1933, German professors showed themselves weak, dishonest, or stupid, but our story proves once more that there were some who were brave, honest, and intelligent while a great many of the others today shamefully regret their previous behavior. (2) It was worse that, in 1933 and the following years, foreign intellectuals, for instance C. G. Jung, who had not even the flimsy excuse of their German colleagues of being under moral or physical pressure, helped the Nazis by lending them their prestige and at the same time by betraying the resistant Germans. (3) It is worst of all that these same foreigners now lend their same prestige to the ferocious theory of the collective and indiscriminate guilt of all Germans (including our Professor Kretschmer or, for that matter, myself!), a theory refuted by their own previous behavior and the opposite one of some of their German colleagues, and furthermore a theory which is bound to be fatal to any solution of the German problem today. Such men prove that it is possible for some people to do the maximum of mischief on every occasion and still to believe that they can get away with it. But at least they do us this service: They make us realize once more how sick and confused the whole world is.

The story of Professor Jung is certainly exceptional in its disgusting details. But there are some other cases that are not very much better. Thus it may be astounding for some people to hear the story of the famous Swiss theologian Karl Barth. He is now passing as one of the great and unbending anti-Nazis, and lately he has been lecturing as such very much and very severely on the Germans in Germany. But this same man, when professor in the University of Bonn, had no qualms about writ-

ing in a letter of December 18, 1934, to the rector of that university that he was prepared to swear the required oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler (stated by Walter Marti in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of December 8, 1946). For anyone acquainted with such types it goes almost without saying that Karl Barth is now bending his knees to the Russians.

#### NAZISM AS TOTALITARIANISM

It would be a misjudgment of the German problem if we were pharisaically to ignore the share of guilt that has to be borne by the world outside Germany; and this guilt is at the same time an offense against that section of the German people which stood out against Nazism. The world will not want to have applied to it Goethe's lines:

*Ihr lasst die Armen schuldig werden,  
Dann überlasst ihr sie der Pein—*

"Ye leave the poor souls guilt to incur, Then send them on to suffer torture." But it would also be an error to see in Nazism nothing more than the sudden madness of a single nation in the midst of an entirely healthy world, and to forget that it was the special German form of a tendency that was of an international character. The Third Reich was the German form of the social and administrative system that we know as totalitarianism; and just as that system is not the mark of a nation but of a period, it came into existence in Germany owing to conditions that can be shown to have existed throughout the civilized world. For reasons peculiar to Germany, she succumbed to germs of disease from which other countries were not free, but against which they were able to set greater powers of resistance. The disease obtained an exceptional hold over Germany because in that country national characteristics, international infection, and the exceptional circumstances of the time made up a particularly dangerous combination. The world could not have had so appalling a degree of complicity in German totalitarianism and its career if it had not already been itself infected.

Some years ago the great French historian and sociologist

Elie Halévy coined the phrase "era of tyrannies,"<sup>2</sup> which has since become famous. But long before this it had become clear that those state systems of which the first had made its appearance in Russia in 1917, and which then appeared in several other countries in a great variety of forms, have essential traits common to all of them, later comprehended under the name "totalitarianism." Whether in bolshevism, fascism, or Nazism, we meet continually with the forcible and ruthless usurpation of the power of the state by a minority drawn from the masses, resting on their support, flattering them and threatening them at the same time; a minority led by a "charismatic leader" (Max Weber) and brazenly identifying itself with the state. It is a tyranny that does away with all the guarantees of the constitutional state, constituting as the only party the minority that has created it, furnishing that party with far-reaching judicial and administrative functions, and permitting within the whole life of the nation no groups, no activities, no opinions, no associations or religions, no publications, no educational institutions, no business transactions that are not dependent on the will of the government.

This total autocracy, in tune with the worst instincts of the masses, acknowledges no other limits than those of expediency in the choice of the means by which it attains power and keeps itself in power. Having been lifted up on the waves of a mass movement, and being entirely dependent on that movement, it devotes all its energy, its inventiveness, and its technique of propaganda to currying favor with the masses. Concentration camps, whose inmates are subjected for an indefinite period to inhuman treatment; secret police, torture chambers, people's courts of "justice," and the most elaborate system of espionage, penetrating even into the family and setting the very children against their parents; frenzied self-advertisement, and continual whipping up of the population by more and more massive stimulants and by the continual announcement of new aims of the "national community" by means of noisy monopolistic propa-

<sup>2</sup> Elie Halévy, *L'ère des tyrannies*, Paris, 1938. The thesis of the book had been propounded by him as early as 1936.

ganda; the utmost mental and economic isolation from the outer world; public "enlightenment," refined to a diabolical science, and reaping its harvest in almost unanimous plebiscites; the cult of an imposed ideology, the cynical perversion of traditional institutions, values, and terms, the deification of the "charismatic" leader, on whose infallibility no shadow of doubt is permitted to be cast, and the directing of popular ill will against one new group after another of "enemies of the people," "malignants," and "saboteurs"—these are the principal methods of this new tyranny. Whenever it has come into power it has ruled by means of the masses and within the masses by means of their worst elements, and against the educated elites, giving careful thought at all times, in every word uttered and every step taken, to the reaction of the masses. Thus it is a form of rule that gives expression to the rising of the masses against the elite of which the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset has written in his book *The Revolt of the Masses*.

The more we gained knowledge of these new totalitarian systems of mass rule, the more we realized not only their similarity of structure, but also the fact that we had to do with a type of dominance that had been known in earlier epochs. We discovered that what the ancients called *tyrannis*, or *cheirotekratia*, what Sulla or the tyrants of the Italian Renaissance had practiced, and what finally alarmed the world in the French Revolution and under Napoleon, had surprisingly many similarities with modern totalitarianism, although this latter had elements with which they cannot be compared, and although it possessed means of domination unknown in past ages. Benjamin Constant wrote in his book *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation* (Hanover, 1814) of the experience of the French Revolution and of Napoleon. Scarcely a page of the classic analysis of totalitarianism in that book can be read without coming to deep truths about the totalitarianism of today. Very often one has only to change the names to apply what is said in this book of 130 years ago to the case of Germany, insulting though it would be to the personality of Napoleon to compare it with that of Hitler.

Just as so much else was repeated, so the experience has been renewed in our day that tyranny, as an illegitimate, usurped form of rule, has no constitutional title of any sort, and consequently regards it as the ultimate purpose of its activities, underlying every word and every action, to find a substitute to make good its lack of a constitutional title and to bolster up the declining popularity of its regime. Hence the necessity for compulsory uniformity of opinion and for ruthless enforcement of the will of the state; hence also the agitated courting of the masses and the hunt after new and more and more spectacular momentary successes, the anxious glances to make sure that the masses and foreign observers are pleased, the lack of the calm a legitimate government can permit itself, the morbid sensitivity to praise or blame, the inferiority complex that betrays itself unmistakably beneath the blatant self-assertiveness, and the concern of every tyranny to counter its illegitimacy and its ephemeral quality with monumental buildings. Hence also the fear of simple ordinariness and the constant invention of new occasions for whipping up the excitement of the population, to prevent the calm that permits clear thought; the launching of slogan after slogan, to "pith" the skulls of the people, so that they can be reduced in the end to accepting praise today of what was damned yesterday. Society is thus turned into a whipping top that can be kept in equilibrium only by rapid turning—by "dynamism," to use one of those mouthing phrases in the invention of which fascism and Nazism were so fertile.

All these peculiarities of the structure of modern tyranny, whose ugliest and extremest form was Nazism, are marked by the *entire dissolution of the values and standards* without which our society, or any other, cannot exist in the long run: a pernicious anemia of morality, a cynical unconcern in the choice of means, which in the absence of firm principles become ends in themselves; a nihilistic lack of principle, and, in a word, what may be described literally as satanism and nihilism. Everything rots away, and finally there remains only one fixed aim of the tyranny, to which all moral principles, all promises, treaties, guarantees, and ideologies are ruthlessly sacrificed—the naked

lust for domination, for the preservation of the continually threatened power, a power held onto for no other purpose than the continued enjoyment of all its fruits. The immorality of such a regime needs no arguing. There is thus scarcely a villainy that is not to be expected from such a regime. All the ideals and emotions blatantly appealed to—social justice, national community, peace, religion, family life, welfare of the masses, claims in the international field, the return to simpler and more natural forms of life, and so forth—prove as a rule to be nothing more than crudely painted interchangeable boards for the staging of mass propaganda. The leaders blow hot and cold; they shriek with indignation at the treatment of German minorities, or they may shamefully sacrifice minorities really ill treated, such as the south Tirolese. The tyrant becomes the most unscrupulous of all publicity agents, only asking himself: How will it work? How will it help to bolster me up?

In Nazism the complete unscrupulousness in the choice of serviceable-looking slogans and the truly reckless speculation on human stupidity reached perhaps its zenith in the invention of the gigantic farce of the propaganda for "European solidarity against bolshevism." After they ruined Europe by their crimes, at the same time openly challenging Soviet Russia, nothing better occurred to the Nazis than to paraphrase the old Wilhelmian slogan, "Peoples of Europe, guard your holiest possessions!" This they did (1) after inciting the Japanese against the Europeans in the Far East; (2) after it had become clear that a Hitlerite Europe was simply not worth saving; (3) after all Europe had realized that it was brazen impudence for the Nazis to rage against bolshevism; and (4) after all Europe had come to ask who would save it from the grip of Nazism. And when these barbarians talked of three thousand years of European civilization being at stake, the only possible answer was roars of laughter.

Such a regime, the expression of complete nihilism and satanism, can be imposed only on a nation that has already suffered the extreme of inner disintegration; but certainly no man can become and remain for any length of time the leader of such



a system unless he is a satanist and nihilist through and through. It is inevitable that such a regime should be an entirely intolerable member of the family of nations and should end sooner or later in a war of conquest. It may fairly be said of it that imperialism begins at home. After reducing its own people to subjection, it will of necessity carry imperialism abroad, in order to remain true to its own principle and practice abroad the looting begun at home, and in order to forestall the results of the justified suspicion among its neighbors; in order, too, to provide a diversion for internal criticism and discontent, to intoxicate its people with the poison of nationalism and imperialism, and to meet the need for spectacular successes after a certain satiation has been reached at home.

Each of the essential traits of tyranny here mentioned does indeed include the urge to war. A regime that has not the slightest respect for the freedom and the rights of the individual will have no greater respect for the freedom and the rights of other nations. If a state applies at home, with complete amorality, every expedient for the acquisition and maintenance of domination, it cannot be expected that it should apply other means abroad, or that it should moderate its lust for power in foreign relations and set limits to it when it sees a prospect of expansion. That such a state should respect international commitments can only be expected by those who have no understanding of its structure. It is clear, too, that a regime that owes its existence to mass enthusiasm, and has constantly to rekindle that enthusiasm, is forced by inescapable laws of psychology to stir up nationalism to a white heat; it can no more dispense with that expedient than it can omit to weld the nation together by resort to the well-tried means of national hatred and war. Such a state will be driven along the same path by the necessity of making good its lack of legitimacy; it must pursue one colossal enterprise after another, in order to impress the people. Thus it is driven to resort to a stimulant that shares with all other stimulants the property of being effective only so long as the dose is continually increased. And once it has been encouraged to pursue this path by slight initial successes, it can

no longer retrace its steps without heading for disaster. And finally the socialistic and autarchic economy that is inseparable from the nature of this totalitarian tyranny cannot but let loose tendencies that powerfully drive the tyranny along the path of extreme nationalism, conquest, and war, since it is an economy based essentially upon expenditure, waste of substance, and ruinous exploitation, and so must be continually on the search for fresh fields to strip bare.

As a rule it takes a considerable time for a tyranny to plunge the world around it into the inevitable war; but this is not due to any peaceful spirit in the tyranny, but to the long-suffering and the weakness of the other countries. They put away from their minds until the last moment the idea that war is inevitable, and hope to avoid it by means of the concessions that the totalitarian state extorts from them, exploiting their love of peace. Tragically, however, it is these very concessions that in the end make war inevitable; step by step they tempt the tyrant along a path from which he himself would no longer be able to retreat even if his successes had not gone to his head. *By abandoning position after position, the peaceful countries gradually maneuver themselves into a situation in which they can no longer under any circumstances avoid war with the totalitarian mischief-maker if they are not to give way all along the line. But they enter the war under conditions that they themselves, through the concessions already made and through the demoralizing effect of their "policy of appeasement," have made as unfavorable as could be.*

It took Europe twelve years to bring Napoleon to his knees, after he had been permitted through weakness, shortsightedness, and disunity to grow great. It took just the same twelve long years—and what years!—for the world to deal with Hitler, and in those years, without intending it, it did everything to make the ultimate war once more as obstinate, as frightful, and as destructive as it possibly could be.

The Napoleonic wars can be compared with Hitler's only with the utmost caution, since Napoleon's relation to Hitler is that of a genuine dignitary of history to a disreputable gangster.

But there is nothing to prevent us from taking from the history of the nineteenth century another example that reveals the part played in international life by an insane tyrant, showing very plainly that the case of Hitler is by no means unique. We refer to the abominable tyrant of Paraguay from 1862 to 1870, Francisco Solano López, who like Hitler was obsessed by the insane idea of giving his continent a "New Order," and who became involved in a war with all his neighbors; he was a precursor on a small scale of the authors of Germany's tragedy to-day. This man, too, imagined that his will was all that was needed to stand the world on its head, and he too was completely blind to the true strength of the opposition he aroused. Relying on his armed force, he embarked on a policy that brought great initial successes, for the reasons stated by Constant, but ultimately, when his imperiled neighbors united against him, plunged his regime and his country into the abyss. "His intellectual arrogance"—so the *Deutsche Rundschau* boldly wrote in April 1941—"growing more and more upon him, clouded his view of the superior moral and economic forces of the neighbor countries. He allowed himself to be elevated more and more by his entourage to the status of a demigod; flattering speeches and the incense of continual adoration intoxicated him, with his natural tendency to exaggerate his own qualities, so that he could not longer see the world as it really was. But his very successes were his undoing. They made the peril of this 'total' state seem so overpowering that Argentina and Brazil forgot their long-standing feud and united in a close alliance against this upstart military power." So came, in the end, the inevitable catastrophe. "For the guilt one man had incurred in his madness, the whole nation must now suffer! *Plectuntur Achivi.*" the article concludes:

"Thus a curse lies to this day upon the name of López, the gloomy tyrant. Finding himself forced into continual retreat, he resorted to more and more senseless measures. But the more his mania developed, the more justification he found for his suspicions; for so much the more eagerly persons with a sense of responsibility sought means of sparing the nation from the

worst and achieving an honorable peace. With the frightful means of the semimediæval criminal law of his time, López frustrated all these efforts. The Paraguayan nation was forced to pursue its Calvary to the bitter end."

In giving this account we are, as we mentioned already, quoting from an article published by the Berlin monthly *Die Deutsche Rundschau*. In doing so we cannot omit to pay tribute to the courage shown by the writer of the article, Ernst Samhaber, and by the editor of that review, Dr. Rudolf Pechel, in allowing the article to appear. We shall have occasion later on to point out that if anyone asks how the German intellect made a stand against National Socialism, one answer must be to speak of the splendid work of the *Deutsche Rundschau*.

We thus see that Nazism is no fabulous monster, no dragon found only in the primeval forests of Germania. It belongs to a species not too difficult to define, which in the nomenclature of sociology bears the name of "totalitarianism." It is certainly a particularly abominable specimen, which under peculiar circumstances was able to grow to saurian dimensions, but which for all that can be classified without difficulty as belonging with every essential characteristic to the species.

But here again it must not be forgotten that in the intellectual procreation of this monster the world outside Germany most certainly played a part. If National Socialism is essentially a particular form of totalitarianism, the story of its intellectual birth must to that extent be also that of totalitarianism. It is a specially complicated story, and this is not the place for its detailed narration. But the very circumstance that German totalitarianism was preceded by the Russian and Italian forms shows to how great an extent Nazism took over and worked out with German thoroughness ideas that were by no means of German origin. It would be wearisome to compile the names that mark the various stages passed through by the ideology of the totalitarian state. But if we merely mention the chief writers, such as the Frenchman Georges Sorel (who by their own acknowledgment strongly influenced both Lenin and Mussolini) and the Italian Pareto, and if we add how deeply the theorists

and practitioners alike both of Russian bolshevism and of Italian fascism influenced the German National Socialists, we have made it easy to see that the outer world worked just as ardently on the building of the intellectual foundations of the Third Reich as did Germany herself.

Even the racial mania that seems to be an exclusive domain of German totalitarianism was presented to the Germans by foreigners—particularly by the French writer Gobineau, who himself simply elaborated the idea that dates back to the eighteenth century. The racial delusion may be described as a cross between those foreign germs and the specifically German ethical romanticism that will occupy us later.<sup>3</sup> While these and other precursors of the Nazi racial doctrine have nothing in common with the appalling delusory character of that doctrine, the fact remains that that is the abyss into which we are inevitably plunged in the end if we once pursue the mistaken path of the biologism of which Darwin and his school laid the foundations. The Nazi racial doctrine is the final putrid product of the decay of an intellectual process by which in the course of the nineteenth century man was degraded, with the zeal of a misunderstood science, to a subject of zoology and stud farming; but in this process all the principal countries of the West took part. The death chambers of Auschwitz and Maidanek are the final gruesome result of certain scientific ideas having ultimately found their way in the course of a century to the morally and mentally lowest levels of humanity, to a group that then, through a social catastrophe of inconceivable dimensions, became the rulers of a great people.

That National Socialism is the expression of an international contemporary spirit rather than that of the spirit of a nation is, finally, also shown by the fact that similar tendencies are to be found in the contemporary literature of all countries, and, at least for a time, were not without influence. Everywhere are the

<sup>3</sup> Among the important representatives of the racial doctrine is the Austrian L. Gumplowicz (*Der Rassenkampf*, Innsbruck, 1883), who exerted considerable influence. It is a tragic irony that he was a Jew. But all he did was to establish the existence of the racial struggle, not to promote it.

"totalitarians in our midst" of whom F. A. Hayek, in his book *The Road to Serfdom*, has given from the English scene a ruthless analysis, not sparing representatives of totalitarianism on the left. It is the painful duty of the honest observer to mention the names of Jewish writers who, like Emil Ludwig or Paul Einzig, have loudly praised Italian fascism, thus laying themselves open to the suspicion that they were kept from a similar admiration of Nazism only by its anti-Semitism.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE PECULIAR FEATURES OF NAZISM

National Socialism undoubtedly belongs to the genus of totalitarianism and is to that extent akin to Russian communism and Italian fascism. On the other hand, it no less clearly shows many peculiar features that give it a unique character, just as in the other cases of totalitarianism. These features are, indeed, so striking that the untrained eye has difficulty in seeing beneath them the true character of Nazism as a totalitarian regime. At the least, it seems as if Nazism can be compared only with Italian fascism, and not with Russian communism, although we know now that the appearance is wholly deceptive, as in all three cases we have to do with the ideology and the reality of the totalitarian termite state and with the collectivism characteristic of it. Yet it is obvious that Nazism and fascism form, relatively to bolshevism, a sharply defined subsection, for which, of course, the term "fascism" has gained currency.

If we are at least to make shift to give some answer to the difficult question as to what the structure of Nazism has in common with that of fascism, in contradistinction with bolshevism, we must emphasize various points.<sup>5</sup> In both cases the totalitarian rule followed a coup d'état that was clothed as far as could be in legal forms and only gradually revealed its revolutionary aims. Both fascism and Nazism set out to establish themselves in an extraordinarily complex society and actually with the aid of decidedly antirevolutionary elements; conse-

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also F. A. Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 230 ff.

<sup>5</sup> In this I am able still to rely on a study I published in 1935—"Fascist Economics," *Economica*, February, 1935.

quently they found themselves compelled to proceed step by step, with a maximum of indefiniteness in their programs, a maximum of mutually incompatible promises, and an appeal to every sentiment that seemed to influence opinion. This explains the total absence of any clear doctrine such as that of the Communists, and its replacement by a rhetorical propaganda that pulled out every stop of passion and emotion. Since neither fascism nor Nazism wanted, like bolshevism, to make a clean sweep of the existing social order, or could do so—both, on the contrary, were compelled at first to leave the traditional class divisions intact—there resulted a necessity for continual compromises, especially in economic policy, which were capable of disguising for a considerable time the collectivist character of the aims pursued. Many measures adopted were simply façades, behind which was either nothing at all or the precise opposite of what they represented. This applies, above all, to the treatment of private property. Just as in Russia the church was openly persecuted, but in the Third Reich it was as far as possible disintegrated from within, so in Russia private property in the means of production was openly abolished, but in the Third Reich it was reduced, by continual restrictions of the rights and functions of the owner, to an empty shell, while for propagandist purposes the shell was allowed to continue to exist. Thus in the two cases the forms of abolition of private property were different but their results were essentially the same.

Fascist and National Socialists made the utmost use of romantic slogans announcing a return to simpler and earlier ways of living and forms of society. But it must have been clear from the outset that these totalitarian regimes, which could end only in economic and social collectivism, could have no genuine intention of continuing to promote a true peasantry and an independent middle class if they were not to stultify themselves. As a matter of fact, the National Socialist agrarian policy was carried out by urban intellectuals who were worlds away from the realities of peasant life. They worked under a man who came from Argentina, and who had clearly read too much of the writings of Hermann Löns, a very influential writer on the

German countryside, whom the Nazis found to their dismay, after solemnly interring his remains, to have been of Jewish descent.

The less it was possible to offer the masses in the way of tangible improvements in their situation, the stronger was the urge to arouse nationalism, making use of the national sentiment that alike in Italy and in Germany had made an important contribution to the growth of the fascist movement. To make capital in this way out of external affairs was the more essential since the cramped conditions in both countries, in comparison with Russia, set clear limits to the employment in home affairs of the energies unleashed. Fascism and Nazism had the same need as bolshevism for "enemies of the people" as targets for the masses, but at first, in accordance with their special character, described above, they respected the existing class differences and had to content themselves with the persecution of defenseless minorities—the Freemasons, the liberals, the Marxists, the pacifists, and in Germany the Jews. Only gradually did each regime grow more radical in this respect, as it became able to establish itself in place of the forces, at first threatening, of the untouched elements of power in the state—army and navy, police, universities, landowners, industrialists, and churches. This growing radicalization was bound steadily to diminish the differences between fascism and Nazism on one side and bolshevism on the other, especially since bolshevism came more and more to adopt "fascist" traits, largely because the Russian social order, at first subjected to extreme simplification, underwent differentiation through the building up of a new social hierarchy and because the power of mass emotions, especially of nationalism, was rediscovered.

Within the general group of totalitarian states, we have sought to outline the common nature of Nazism and fascism; it remains to determine the elements peculiar to Nazism. We come here to the essence of the matter—the special nature alike of German conditions, the German national character, and German history.



To begin with there is the general fact that Nazism, even in the points in which it resembles fascism, differs from it through an exaggeration, a coarsening, and a logical consistency that we may certainly regard as an expression of German pedantry, "thoroughness," and lack of moderation. All the things that down in the south were amateurish or had an operative quality were put through in Germany with the grimmest seriousness and carried to the bitter end. Reservations and modifications permitted in Italy were rejected in Germany. The naïveté of the south became self-consciousness and cheap sentimentality in Germany. At the same time everything was regarded in a light that was much more "romantic," in a bad and morbid sense. In Italy *Blut und Boden*, "blood and soil," at least meant Virgil, Augustus, and the Renaissance; in Germany they meant primeval forests and heathen barbarism. It is in consonance with this that it remained for Nazism, in the race mania for which "anti-Semitism" is much too weak a term, to sink to the lowest animal level of group hatred, and to be led by it into a savage policy with which even the history of Italian fascism has nothing to compare. There was no room in the north for even a temporary compromise with the Christian churches, and so the German Nazi was bound to appear to the average Fascist as just a barbarian Goth, a subject alike for fear and contempt, in spite of the unscrupulousness common to both types. In addition to this, Nazism unquestionably had from the outset a much more definite mass character than fascism and was much more deeply rooted in the actual proletariat. It had set itself from the first to win over the mass of manual and office workers, and it cannot be denied that Nazism was largely successful in this aim, especially among the younger generation, which lacked the liberal traditions of the old trade unions. It is not sufficiently realized today that it was on these proletarianized and traditionless masses that Nazism mainly depended; it was these that it exerted itself to flatter, and they responded only too readily to its courtship. Nazism gave them a sense of status that raised their self-importance to arrogance; it showed them a consideration that it would have been suicidal for an employer to ex-

pect. In comparison with these classes, not inconsiderable sections of the upper middle class showed a much better attitude.

There is a final point of the utmost importance. Nazism and fascism had an aggressive nationalism in common, in contrast with Russian communism, but in this respect again Nazism far outran fascism for the following reasons: To begin with, Germany was so much wealthier and more powerful than Italy that the temptation to conquest was bound to be correspondingly greater. Secondly, Nazi militarism and imperialism had the benefit of a tradition, that of Greater Prussia, that Italy lacked. Thirdly, and this perhaps is the most important of all, Nazism was distinguished not only from communism but also from fascism by the repulsive conceit that proclaimed the Germans to be a chosen people, a master race—a doctrine that carried the race mania into international politics.

#### THE RELENTLESS MACHINERY OF TOTALITARIANISM

A totalitarianism of this sort, with all the special characteristics of that form of rule and also the peculiarities of its own that we have described—such was National Socialism. As in all totalitarian countries, it overwhelmed people and government by a coup d'état devilishly staged, a coup in which all the resources of cunning and violence were regarded as legitimate; and just as it had not come into power through a revolutionary popular movement, it could not be removed by that means. Once it had established itself, it could only be overthrown by the same means, the coup d'état, that had brought it into power, or by intervention from abroad. As everywhere where totalitarianism had conquered the state, the German nation as a whole was condemned to impotent submission to tyranny, and must not only allow itself to be ordered about and exploited and directed in its every movement, but also to be demoralized and corrupted, until at last the fatal optical illusion was produced that the German nation could be identified with Nazism.

As fate would have it, only those can fully understand the path the German nation has trod since 1933 who have had

actual experience of the sociology of totalitarianism, whereas today nations are called to decide about Germany for the very reason that they resolutely rejected totalitarianism and would have nothing to do with it. Those nations have no knowledge, all of us outside Germany have no knowledge, of what it meant to live for twelve terrible years under such a regime, and the imagination cannot take the place of that absent knowledge. But perhaps we shall not appeal to those nations in vain if we suggest that we all must avoid any sort of pharisaism and constantly bear in mind that, for the very reason that we have been spared that tragic experience, we are bound to reserve judgment and to permit ourselves to be instructed at every possible opportunity. We can all learn from the intelligent and noble German woman who wrote to me after the outbreak of war that she had always been of the same mind with me and hoped to continue so, but that after long years of experience she realized that she could not know how she would be affected by the war propaganda and the completely one-sided information. Should she in the future become untrue to her past views, I must remember in her favor that she had to live under conditions that made her quite irresponsible. That she nevertheless bravely stood her ground proves her greatness of intellect and character, but not any mistakenness in her remarks.

The all-important thing we must always keep in mind is the incontrovertible fact that *the National Socialists did not come into power by the clear will of a majority of the German nation, but by the disreputable backstairs method of the coup d'état.* At the beginning of the Third Reich the majority of the German nation was opposed to Nazism, and the importance of this fundamental fact is in no way diminished because, by the iron logic of totalitarianism, the nation that had become its victim suffered on top of all else immeasurable injury to its soul and was brought down to the acceptance of its own servitude. And was the development very different in Italy or in the communistic countries? Have the Poles, the Rumanians, the Latvians, or the Yugoslavs, all, or even a majority of them,

become Communists, simply because the ruthless machinery of totalitarianism has descended upon them? And is even the case of Russia so unambiguous that we may identify the Russians with communism, or more precisely with Stalinism? Is not the answer obvious?

Nobody is entitled to forget that the Nazis never gained a majority vote from the Germans in a free election. On the contrary, we must bear in mind that even the Reichstag election of March 1933, held already under terrorism, and falsified into the bargain, brought the Nazis no more than some 43 per cent of the total vote. We must keep in mind also what unimaginable deviltries—beginning with the burning of the Reichstag—they had to commit in order to break the resistance of so many Germans, and what an utterly criminal system of the most brutal violence and the most subtle deceptions they had to invent and perfect in order to maintain themselves in power.

After the Nazis had come into power, it became more and more an irrelevance to estimate how many Germans supported Hitler. The only datum of any value would have been the number of émigrés and inmates of concentration camps; and even this would have been of value only so far as concerned those who were persecuted on account of their political conviction, and therefore as the result of their own courageous stand, and not those other victims who could not help being Jews. That the number of political émigrés, especially at first, was relatively small, is not a fact in favor of the Germans, although it must not be forgotten that the tightening up of the immigration legislation of almost all countries placed much greater obstacles in the way of German emigrants than earlier in the way of the Russians or even of the Italians. As for the attitude of the remaining Germans, the honest answer was at all times that we had no knowledge of it and no means of ascertaining it.

What it *was* possible to know, however, was this one fact, over and over again: As soon as a totalitarian regime of this sort is installed, it acquires a dominance over its population

that makes it impossible to continue to apply normal human standards. Its subjects are reduced to a state of existence that makes them in a high degree morally irresponsible; but it is precisely then that allowance must be made for the fact that these conditions were imposed against their will. Thereafter, the slightest attempt at resistance is all the more to their credit. No totalitarian regime has profited by these conditions for the control and corruption of the people with more devilish calculation than the Nazi regime. Who that has not experienced it can realize what it meant to live under the continual pressure of an inconceivable terror and in an atmosphere in which a man could no longer trust his neighbor or his friend or his own child? There are people who say that the Germans ought to have made a more courageous stand against Nazism and its atrocities, and we fully share this opinion. But ought we not, in order to be quite just, also bear in mind that diabolical hostage system of the Nazis, which threatened the family of every rebel with a cruel death? How far was a man entitled to show courage at the expense of his wife and children?

Who, again, can judge the way the soul of man reacts to an unceasing flow of subtle monopolist propaganda, shutting out all other information? It may be admitted that the German, for reasons we shall consider later, is particularly easily influenced and particularly lacking in judgment in all political questions; but we do not know how the experiment would have worked out with any other nation that was unable, like the occupied countries of Europe, to draw strength from resistance, from the patriotic revolt against the impudent pretensions of an alien conqueror speaking another language. The whipping up of the German's patriotism, on the contrary, bound him all the more strongly to his own tyrannical government. The case of Austria comes fairly close to an experiment of this sort, but who will claim that the Austrians behaved much better than the Bavarians, the Rhinelanders, or the Hanoverians?

Today the world is filled with horror and unbounded indignation in face of the evidence of the conditions of terror

that the Nazis left behind them in the Golgothas of their concentration camps. All too many people are inclined to judge the German nation only the more harshly on this score, contending that the Germans had tolerated these crimes. We ask those who argue thus: Is it not more logical to see in these conditions the incontrovertible proof of the terror under which the Germans lived day and night through twelve years? If Englishmen or Americans retort that they are sure they would not have tolerated anything so disgraceful under similar conditions, they should thank the merciful fate that saved them from being enabled to give practical evidence of what they are so sure about. In Germany, too, there was a time when, in face of the barbarism of Italian fascism, people declared with the utmost conviction that "such a thing would be impossible among us." Is it fair to make the Germans pay for the fact that their critics have had no personal experience of what it means to be helplessly delivered over to this crippling horror, the creation of which is one of the principal secrets of totalitarianism?

The world is deeply to blame for having for so long taken all too little notice of the atrocities Nazism committed against the Germans themselves. Now, faced with the whole grisly truth, are we to blame the German nation alone for remaining inactive, after the rest of us had allowed it to be brought into a situation in which those who moved a finger inescapably took the road that led to Buchenwald and the other Golgothas? Are not these concentration camps, indeed, the most moving evidence that even under the most frightful terror there were still plenty of Germans who did resist? It is understandable that in the first flaming indignation the world allowed itself to be carried away into illogical inferences, but we cannot believe that it can long shut its ears to the voice of impartial justice. It will then, perhaps, at least silently, ask itself what may have been going on in the last ten years in the concentration camps and labor camps of Siberia and of the Russian tundra, and come to the conclusion that a diabolical system of

terror is everywhere one of the means of totalitarian domination.

Many seem to be exasperated by the fact that Germans are prone to declare that they knew nothing of the horrors of the concentration camps. There are many explanations, however, that make it unnecessary to jump at once to the suspicion of obduracy. (1) It is possible that they want to hide their shame from the victors. (2) It is possible that the phrase "I know nothing about it" is the very natural reaction of people who have learned through twelve years to give evasive answers whenever they can, as the surest way of escaping from those very concentration camps. (3) It is possible that in a certain sense the Germans are right in saying that they knew nothing of these horrors. Naturally they had at all times a vague idea, and for that very reason a particularly terrifying one, of what went on in the concentration camps; it was, indeed, an essential element in the Nazi system of terrorism to spread that idea. But to know any details, and still more to talk about them and to betray one's knowledge, might cost a man his life. We must add that it would be very unjust to forget that the Nazi fiends made a system of seeing to it that the members of a man's family should suffer for any resistance of his. Thus the question arose: How much courage may a man show at the expense of his wife, his children, his parents, or his brothers and sisters, whom, if he offers open resistance, he will be delivering up to the government's executioners and torturers? And then another thing: A Swiss colleague who, on the invitation of the French general Delattre de Tassigny, made a journey through southern Germany in the summer of 1945 has told me that the French, too, had just discovered one of the horrible concentration camps, but found that the guards were largely French militiamen. On the other hand, Frenchmen who had been in the regular German prisons stated that they had been properly treated. The two facts illustrate the truth we have emphasized—one that is unfortunately too often forgotten—that it is a question of the system and the human type, not of the national spirit, and that it is such systems and such types that have to

be made an end of, not the nations in which they are found. Finally, it should be said that most Germans would probably have been very glad if but a fraction of the present-day indignation about the concentration camps had been as vocal twelve years ago.

Other things contribute to such a nation's sinking ever deeper into the morass of a totalitarian state, bravely though individuals may resist it. In a state whose slimy tentacles reach everywhere, what may be called "spiritual emigration" is especially difficult. It is a daily and hourly struggle, in which the strongest may ultimately be crippled, especially when nervous exhaustion and physical undernourishment and continual mental overexcitement are added. Everyday life with its petty cares goes on, and, as the example of the occupied countries shows, it is almost impossible for those who do not simply withdraw into the Maquis to avoid manifold relations with the despots, relations that at first seem entirely neutral but in the long run prove to be so many threads that entangle the individual in responsibility for the despotism. Dulled feelings and gradual familiarization also play their part; and finally it was one of the devilish methods of the Nazis to compel as many people as possible to fulfill this or that function in the machine, and so to corrupt them.

There was a peculiar *mechanism of spiritual reaction* that played its part in the case of all those who entered into any compromise, however seemingly innocent, with the regime. There were, unfortunately, thousands in Germany, diplomats, journalists, industrial leaders, professors, judges, and other members of the directing classes, who, without being National Socialists, were unable to summon up the resolution to break with Nazism, even where this involved no particular risk. Their anxiety to continue to play a part in the world, and their fear of the drabness of existence without function or status, overcame the promptings of indignation at the satanic character of the regime; and probably there were countless people, particularly in Germany, who clung to a specifically German conception of "duty" that at bottom was simply a euphemism for



lack of pluck. One could draw up a long list of all the theories with which one person and another tried to conceal what in truth was simply anxiety to be "in the swim." They told themselves and others that if they remained at their post they could "prevent worse things," that they must not let themselves be "frozen out," that "hanging on" demanded greater sacrifices than resigning, that "one must not leave the Fatherland in the lurch at this difficult time," and made all sorts of similar excuses—where the kind fate of some conflict with the racial laws did not take the decision out of their hands. But anyone who had once given his little finger very soon felt himself compelled to be silent where his conscience would have told him to speak, to do nothing where as an honest person he should have acted, to descend to lying and hypocrisy or to do something that made him an accomplice. Then there remained only three alternatives: it was still possible to make the decision to break with the regime; or every fresh day would inevitably bring fresh cause of self-contempt; or the effort must be made to persuade oneself that in one's judgment of National Socialism one must, after all, have been a little mistaken. For the first alternative many people no longer had the courage, and the second would have been against human nature. Thus there remained only the third course; men began to talk of "the good sides of the regime that do after all exist," of the possibility of gradual normalization, or of the supposed necessity of helping the "decent" Nazis against the worse ones. Nothing could have suited Nazism better.

All this shows perfectly clearly that the Germans became accomplices in the Third Reich, although at first the majority of them had no desire for it; but this is very far from meaning that Nazism is in harmony with the German soul. As we know, it is of no use to try to base that allegation on the fact that the Germans never made a successful attempt to bring down the regime and that all the hopes set on a German revolution during the war ended in disappointment. Even this latter fact does not by any means mean that there were not at least attempts that failed, and it is only now that we are slowly learning the truth

about the resistance actually offered to the most powerful system of dominance known to history—from such witnesses as still remain alive. In any case, it was clear in advance that anyone who expected the ending of Nazism by a popular revolution showed his complete inability to realize the true structure of such a totalitarian system. Not one of these systems has so far been overthrown in this way, for reasons we know already; and where, as in Fascist Italy, the spell was broken, it was not through a revolution but through a coup d'état, which was enormously facilitated there by the fact that, unlike Russia and Germany, Italy still possessed the monarchy as the last remaining source of the legitimate, prerevolutionary authority of the state. Even under these exceptionally favorable circumstances the coup d'état in Italy was carried through only after the complete disintegration of the army and in face of a disastrous defeat.

In Germany, too, *the totalitarian regime could only be brought down by a coup d'état or by foreign intervention*. We are not entitled, therefore, to ask why the Germans did not throw off the Nazi yoke. What we have to ask is why those who were in a position to do so did not bring down Nazism by a coup d'état when that was still possible. The only group, however, that had the power to do this was the generals, representing the Prussian tradition, and their following. That no serious attempt was made in time and carried out in full force from that quarter is indeed the indelible historic default for which the group of generals and the classes at their back are to blame. Their guilt in this respect makes it necessary to do away once for all with the influence of that group, an influence that throughout the last hundred years has been so fatal for Germany herself and for Europe; but this is not guilt that can be charged against the Germans as a whole.

Sages and social philosophers of all times have declared that the worst harm a tyranny can do to a nation is to drag it down morally, and all examples in history confirm the rule. The process of continuing demoralization and corruption has been given an unexcelled description, once more by Benjamin Con-

stant, in dealing with the experiences of the Napoleon period. The whole relevant section of his book *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation* (Part I, Chap. 8, pp. 28-32) deserves to be quoted here in full, because every sentence fits the case of the German nation and describes its inner collapse, after falling victim to Nazism, better than we can do. Above all, we may let Constant speak for us in describing the influence upon the German people of the world war started by the Nazis:

Although abandoning itself to its gigantesque projects, the government would not dare to say to its nation: Let us march to the conquest of the World. The nation would reply to it with a unanimous voice: We do not want to conquer the World.

But it would speak of national independence, of national honor, of the rounding off of the frontiers, of commercial interests, of precautions dictated by prudence; of all sorts of things—for inexhaustible is the vocabulary of hypocrisy and injustice.

It would speak of national independence, as if the independence of a nation is compromised because other nations are independent.

It would speak of national honor, as if national honor is wounded because other nations uphold their honor.

It would allege the necessity of the rounding off of the frontiers, as if this doctrine, once admitted, did not banish from the earth all repose and all equity. For it is always outward that a government wants to round off its frontiers. . . .

This government would invoke the interests of commerce, as if it were serving commerce to depopulate a country of the flower of its youth, tearing away the most necessary hands from agriculture, from manufactures, from industry, to raise blood-drenched barriers between itself and other peoples.

Under the pretext of precautions dictated by prudence, this government would attack its most peaceful neighbors, its humblest allies, attributing hostile projects to them, and affecting to forestall aggression meditated by them. If the unfortunate objects of its calumnies were easily subjugated, it would boast of having been too quick for them; if they had the time and the force to offer resistance, You see, it would exclaim, they wanted war, because they are defending themselves. . . .

Subjects who suspect their masters of duplicity and perfidy are trained in perfidy and duplicity; he who hears the leader who governs

him called a great politician, because every line that he publishes is an imposture, wishes to be a great politician in his turn, in a less exalted sphere; truth seems to him foolishness; fraud, cleverness. In the past he lied only for profit; he will lie in future for profit and self-respect. He will have the conceit of the imposter; and if the contagion extends to an essentially imitative people, and a people among whom everyone is afraid to be thought a dupe, will it be long before private morality is engulfed in the shipwreck of public morality?

We should like to say to the Germans: Do you not see yourselves in this picture? Did you not permit yourselves all too readily to be deceived as to the true causes and the real aims of this war? Were you not already sunk so low that you took pride in the successful overpowering of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and other peaceful and kindly nations, and regarded the heroic resistance they then put up as mere obstinacy? Did not all of you, whether Nazis or not, allow yourselves to be carried away by the intoxication of victory when your armies overran France? Did you not permit yourselves so to stray in heart and mind that you supported your criminal leaders when they fell upon Czechoslovakia? Did you not hear with dull indifference, even perhaps with satisfaction, the news of the first fiendish bombardments of Warsaw, Rotterdam, and Belgrade, of London and Coventry? You profess now that you were never supporters of the Nazi regime. Could you, if you had honestly asked yourselves, have given this assurance when Europe seemed to be falling into the laps of your masters, and would you be giving it now if the whole adventure had not come to grief? Let each of you hold deep communion with himself, and give account honestly and unreservedly to himself as if he stood before Almighty God. If you have to admit that you cannot answer our questions with a candid yes, then admit your guilt. Nazism would have gained final and complete mastery over you were you to fail to admit the immense guilt you have incurred and the bitter need to expiate it and so to purge yourselves of it.

But we should also have to say to the other nations: The guilt of the Germans is different from that of the National So-

cialists; it is the guilt of the seduced, not of the seducers, the degradation of the violated, not the infamy of the violators. It shows that a people on whom tyranny has worked its own corruption of soul had integrity enough to be capable of corruption, and may still have integrity enough left to be able to rid itself of the corrupting poison if it is not simply damned in common with its seducers. They knew only too well that there is no greater means of corruption than a successful war, which adds to all the other bonds with which a tyranny shackles its people the strongest bond of all, that of common peril from without and the ignition of the patriotic and warlike passions that peril arouses.

It will also be rather unimaginative to ask why there were no mass mutinies of German troops or risings of German workers. Everyone who has served in an army knows that it is not a simple matter to mutiny, and that efficient command can make it almost impossible. Must we still further point out that the Austrian troops fought everywhere with distinction for the Third Reich, to say nothing of the contingents of all sorts of nationalities who fought many a hard battle against the Allies in Italy and France? And finally we may ask, Why did the millions of slave workers brought into Germany from other countries keep quiet, though they surely had reason enough to rise against their masters?

It would be fatal if the Germans made up their minds that their guilt had been the work of an inescapable destiny, and so missed the way to liberation from their guilt through repentance and regeneration. But it would be just as lamentable if the rest of the world failed to realize that under a totalitarian regime it is possible to share the responsibility for the regime without bearing the same responsibility as its leaders, and if the world were so to miss the way to understanding helpfulness and Christian compassion.

#### THE ATROCITIES

But how can we get over the appalling fact that the Germans, wherever they carried their conquests, committed the

most horrible crimes and hair-raising cruelties, that the German name is associated with the cold-blooded extermination of millions, with the infliction of indescribable tortures, with unfeeling destruction of irreplaceable values, and with causing infinite mental torment? All those of us who learned with boundless indignation and the deepest horror of these crimes know how near we were to wishing for that execrable country the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. And yet the National Socialists would have attained one of the aims they were probably pursuing with their atrocities if we allowed ourselves to be carried away by our anger into identifying Germany with Nazism. This is the very point at which our sense of justice is subjected to its hardest test and must not fail us. The test is very hard even if we recall that unfortunately this is not the first time in history that terror, mass murder, and the most appalling cruelties have made their appearance in the midst of a nation; that in England Henry VIII delivered seventy thousand to the hangman, that in Soviet Russia millions of peasants have been "liquidated" in cold blood, and that a few decades ago millions of Armenians were cruelly murdered in Turkey.

This sense of justice demands from us the recognition of the fact that what was done in Germany's name was not done by the Germans as such, any more than all the crimes that were committed earlier in time of peace against the Germans themselves. It is unfortunate that it was only after the outbreak of the war that the British government published in a second "White Paper" (1939) all the facts on the proved crimes committed by Nazis against Germans, facts it had known all the time. Yet those recorded are but a tiny sample from the vast flood of the atrocities committed in Germany since 1933. Probably the full truth will never be learned, since too many of the witnesses have themselves become victims of the same terror machine. According to a careful estimate made by the German Trade Union Secretariat in Great Britain (*The Other Germany, Facts and Figures*), in the first three years of Nazi rule alone sentences totaling some 600,000 years of imprisonment were pronounced against "enemies of the state." The

number of persons condemned to death by the end of 1938 was estimated at 12,000, and in April 1939, according to the same source, there were 302,562 political prisoners in Germany, while the registers of the Gestapo contained the names of some two million political suspects. The number of persons herded together and tortured in the concentration camps is as yet beyond all possibility of estimating, and the things that happened in Germany during the war must have been one long chain of horrors. Only with the discoveries at Belsen, Buchenwald, and the rest did the veil begin to be lifted. Unfortunately, the world only too easily forgets that these Golgothas were originally set up for the martyring and subduing of Germans, not of foreigners, and served this purpose gruesomely to the very end. How can it be forgotten in this connection that we have to do with a totalitarian regime, and not only that but a regime at war and accordingly able to carry totalitarianism to the last extreme, a regime able to keep its people almost entirely ignorant of anything it did not want them to know, and one that, even if the people had been informed, would have ruthlessly suppressed all expression of opinion? As a rule it was Nazi special troops or agents of the Gestapo that carried out the sanguinary orders of the leaders, and often the worst of all were not strictly Germans. At the head of the German terrorist regime in the unfortunate Netherlands was an Austrian of even more undoubted nationality than Hitler, and Vlassov's Cossacks competed with units of the SS and the Gestapo in mercilessness. Would anyone set down for all time as crimes of the Italian people Graziani's massacre of Arabs in Libya, the abominable conduct of the war in Abyssinia, or the Good Friday attack on Albania?

It was Nazism that showed its true features, not the German nation, in the atrocities.<sup>6</sup> These features could long ago have been recognized if sufficient attention had been paid to the

<sup>6</sup> The same conclusion forces itself upon us in all other cases. Thus, C. Burnell Olds writes in the American *Foreign Affairs* that the Japanese people must not be held responsible for the cruelties of the Japanese militarists, and he writes in warm appreciation of the attractive sides of the character of the Japanese people and of Japanese culture.

earlier activities of Nazism in Germany. What else but the blackest criminality could have been expected, for instance, from the Dr. Best who excited German opinion long before the Third Reich with his so-called "Boxheim documents"? It might even fairly be asked whether the Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero was not right when, after the massacre of June 30, 1934, he wrote that the savagery of the Nazis, exceeding all that had gone before, might be due to the exceptional resistance they had to overcome in Germany.

But even if we speak of Nazi and not of German atrocities, the question forces itself upon us how it happened that Germany could produce so many men of the lowest type as instruments of Nazism. This question, too, needs careful attention. It would be difficult, and in conflict with an impartial examination of German history, to claim that the German is by nature cruel, treacherous, or otherwise loathsome, and even the recollection of the horrors of Louvain and Dinant of the war of 1914 must not lead us astray. There certainly is a German character, formed by history and environment, and we shall have occasion to discuss it at length, and certainly this character has many dark sides, among which one is struck by a certain methodical vehemence. But nobody who is trying to form an objective judgment can rest content with the theory that the Germans are a race of murderers, thieves, torturers, and bestial bullies.

If we probe to the bottom of the question, we shall probably come up against the following general truth: Every society, however civilized and Phaeacian it may seem to us, conceals in its depths a sewer of subhuman types, which must be kept firmly closed like the fisherman's bottle in the *Arabian Nights*. In other words, the powers of evil lurk everywhere, awaiting their chance from some earthquake or conflagration, revolution or war. Bore into these depths and it will be seen how masses of the dregs of humanity are hurled into the air. Ask the French with their bloodthirsty militia of the Laval regime, the Norwegians with their *birdeu*, the Dutch, the Croats, the Hungarians, or the Austrians, and let not the Englishman or American be too



sure that "it can't happen here." Instead, let them be glad that they have been spared that experience so far. And we will not be so tactless as to ask how things are in Russia.

The upheaval of society by totalitarianism must of necessity bring the worst elements to the top.<sup>7</sup> That is a general law, which has only been confirmed by Nazism and is of universal application all over the world. Wherever anything resembling the Nazi upheaval has happened (as in Russia, in Italy, or elsewhere), the biggest blackguards have regularly set the tone, dragging the honor of their country through the mire. Thus what happened in Germany was simply that such men as the execrable von Papen and his backers, who can never do adequate penance for their stupidity and perversity, opened up the sewers of the German community, a process that some of them, by unpardonable stupidity, even mistook for the fresh-water supply.

That is the actual kernel of what happened. Let us repeat, however, a sad truth already mentioned, by adding that twelve years of such a regime have carried the germs of corruption deep into the German soul, and above all have played havoc that will be made good only with difficulty in the souls of the particularly easily influenced German youth. It is unfortunately probable that thousands upon thousands of Germans have been incurably perverted. All that can be done will be to make it impossible for them to do any harm.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the special chapter X of the book by F. A. Hayek already mentioned, *The Road to Serfdom*.

## THE GERMAN RESPONSIBILITY

## GENERAL AND GROUP RESPONSIBILITY

SO FAR we have been at pains to practice the difficult virtue of justice, and to prove the untenability of the theory that at bottom Nazism is nothing else than the hated Germany, of which it is impossible to be too suspicious. We have shown that Nazism was essentially of the general type of totalitarianism, though in one of its worst forms; but it was not Teutonism. We have represented to the world outside Germany its great share of responsibility, and have uttered a warning against any pharisaical condescension toward the German people, not least in order to prevent the outer world from falling victim to the same poison of national arrogance, collective hatred, and summary collective justice, and to remind it, with the example of Germany before its eyes, of the eternal truth of the Bible saying (Prov. 14:34), "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." We have given reason to conclude that the difference between the average German and the men of other nations is in truth not so great, and that Nazism corresponded at least as much to the general spirit of our day as to the special German conditions. We have emphatically urged that the Germans must be regarded at least as much as victims deserving of commiseration or persons seduced against their will as creators of the nameless evil that in their name and with their aid was spread over the world. Thus we have made our own the apt formula of a Frenchman, *Les Boches ont vaincu les Allemands*.

But because we are concerned for justice, we have kept clear of any attempt, which in this case would be especially repulsive, at special pleading, and have spoken of deep guilt that demands expiation where no other term would have been in place. The time has now come to lay full emphasis on this German guilt and to discuss it in itself and its context. We shall have further to show emphatically that we owe it not least to the Germans themselves to do this, since their only remaining hope lies in the recognition of their guilt, in repentance, and in rebirth.

Important as it is to recall that the Nazis came into power neither through an irresistible popular movement nor through a free majority vote but by the backstairs method of the coup d'état, it is, on the other hand, an unfortunate fact that even before they came into power a large part of the German people had ranged themselves in support of the Nazis, while the rest of the nation had been gravely weakened in its power of moral and intellectual resistance. Anyone who witnessed the final triumph of the Nazis in Germany will never forget how it all began.

Here again I find it necessary to speak of a personal experience. At the end of the summer vacation in August 1930, I was in my native village, on the Lüneburg Heath. The Nazis had been feverishly at their subversive work for the impending Reichstag elections. One day my mother—whom I was never to see again after 1933—came to my study and told me with great emotion that even among our sensible peasants of Lower Saxony the Nazi activities were having really alarming success. There were very few people left with whom it was still possible to talk rationally. My mother made it clear to me that my standing as a university professor required of me that I should speak a word of warning. I was profoundly alarmed, and agreed with my mother. Accordingly, I had a leaflet printed, in which I spoke to our peasants as one of themselves, appealing to their common sense and their consciences and showing how appallingly they were being deceived. I made it perfectly clear to them what must ultimately happen if these hordes were to come

into power. By now they will have realized that my darkest prophecies have been outdone. But at the time I was laughed at and abused. With that unforgettable Reichstag election, in which the Nazis became at a bound one of the strongest parties and were able, together with the Communists, who had also triumphed, to exert at once a crippling influence on Germany's political and economic life, the tragedy began.

It was indeed a sort of terrible mass epidemic, rapidly spreading and every day making fresh victims, even in quarters one had always supposed to be immune. And against this Nazi plague nothing seemed to avail, neither the appeal to common sense nor the moral appeal, while on the other hand it was furthered by every possible circumstance and chance happening, in a way that made one feel that this was indeed the march of destiny. All classes were dosed with the poison in the most effective quantity and strength in each case, and everywhere every class was brought down, clerks and mechanics with their employers, peasants and aristocrats, professors, officers, industrialists, bankers, civil servants. The friend of yesterday turned overnight into one possessed, with whom it was no longer possible to argue, and the more the movement succeeded the more the nervous, the cynical, and the ambitious joined the genuinely convinced fanatics, the crazy, and the moral perverts, and the more the will power of those responsible for the administration of the state was crippled. As for the later behavior of the Germans, after the triumph of totalitarianism, we have already said all that is necessary.

All this is the responsibility of the German people as a whole, from which only a minority can with a good conscience claim to be free—a minority to which is due from us the deeper respect, the more comfortably we were installed in some safe haven abroad. Let those who have to share this general guilt never forget that it involves complicity in the most bestial atrocities that men could devise and commit, complicity in the torture and death of millions, in the devilish crimes of Oradour-sur-Glane, Vercors, Lidice, Auschwitz, Maidanek, and countless villages and towns of almost all the countries occupied by the

Germans, complicity in the massacres of Warsaw, in the vandal destruction of irreplaceable libraries, and in thousands of other enormities that the pen can scarcely put down. And let no German drive the exasperation of the world to the pitch of frenzy by attempting to deny happenings of which there is documentary evidence, and of which he knows in his heart that the accounts are true, since they are entirely in consonance with the character, which he knows only too well, of Nazism.

But much greater still is the special *guilt of a few important groups* that made the decisive contribution to the triumph of Nazism, and this guilt is still graver since these were persons prominent in German life who had no claim to the benefit of extenuating circumstances that is due at all events to the masses. Among these people are especially the following groups:

- (1) Those who took part in the decisive intrigue of January 30, 1933—von Papen and his accomplices, the Prussian Junkers threatened by the Osthilfe scandal, the generals involved in the plot, and captains of industry, such as Fritz Thyssen;
- (2) the military circles that gave their support through thick and thin to Hitler as a man who was being successful and was meeting their professional wishes, so that they let slip the opportunity for a coup d'état;
- (3) the financiers who, like Schacht, placed their vulgar talents at the service of the regime out of cynicism, ambition, or infatuation;
- (4) the members of the Reichstag who in March 1933 passed the decree conferring absolute powers on the government;
- (5) the civil servants and diplomats who, like Popitz, Schwerin-Krosigk, Neurath, and most of the German representatives in foreign countries, placed themselves in the service of the new masters; and
- (6) the great group of intellectuals—professors, journalists, artists, and authors. With this last group we shall have to deal at length, as its responsibility is probably the worst and the most unpardonable.

## THE INTELLECTUALS

Once a movement breaks out, may God protect  
us from the journalists and the professors.

ADALBERT STIFTER in a letter  
to *Gustav Heckenast* (1849)

There is scarcely another class in Germany that failed so fatally as that of the intellectuals in general, with the exception of a large part of the clergy of both confessions and some notorious university professors. This failure was so fatal because it resulted in a crippling of the conscience of the German nation. At a later stage we shall go thoroughly into the deeper historical roots of the betrayal of their mission by the German intellectual leaders. It was, in point of fact, a long process of degeneration and perversion of which we have here to describe the final steps.

We must begin with the remark that Nazism was unthinkable without an intellectual labor of subversion that had been carried on by whole generations of decadent writers. Nietzsche and his disciples must be named among these, and Spengler with his *Decline of the West*, and all those lesser spirits—Hans Blüher, Franz Haider, Steding, and Ernst Jünger (who, to make matters worse, was also a writer of talent)—men whose names are almost entirely unknown outside Germany, but who must not be overlooked by anyone who wants to understand how their country could plunge into the abyss of Nazism and commit not only spiritual but physical suicide.

We may ignore here the actual illiterates of the Nazi party, but we must point out the particularly great influence of groups of rather higher mental quality who, for the very reason that they spread essentially Nazi ideas in a disguised form, made an important contribution toward preparing the German middle class and the students for the Third Reich. The pattern for this sort of perfumed Nazism was supplied by a circle of hysterical literati who distributed every fortnight in the review *Die Tat* ("Action") an eagerly swallowed concoction in which ideas of

Nietzsche, Spengler, Sombart, and others of that ilk were mixed together in the style of the youth movement.<sup>1</sup>

This so-called *Tatkreis* (action group) presented in an unbearable style an extremism for which even Bolshevist Russia and Fascist Italy were too liberal. It pressed for further enslavement of personality and a further spread of authoritarian tutelage. Its strident nationalism led in economic policy to the pure insanity of autarchy. In its wild irrationalism it rejected the economic and social order of the West and its whole civilization. It preached homage to the myths of the nation, the state, the masses, and power, and contempt for economic prosperity and for the principles that assure it—and all this in the tone of social prophecy, with unctuous talk of destiny and history, and with an arrogance exceeded only by its ignorance. "Long live barbarism" was its cry at one moment. Such was the mire in which it loved to wallow. These *Edelnazis* ("gentlemen Nazis") had at all events sense enough to know that their babbling could not face rational discussion, and accordingly, in the true Nazi style, they elevated unreason to the dignity of a supreme principle, and declared the weapon of argument to be a "liberal" toy—"liberal" clearly implying for them the depth of depravity. From this dreaded weapon of argument they took refuge in physical force. The illiberal person, wrote *Die Tat* on one occasion, "either depends confidently and resolutely, but passively, on himself, or, where he has to fight actively and combatively, takes the sword. The sword is the only argument that does not fit in with the liberalist system of reason and discussion. The sword and the fist." In other words, the only reply they had left was the cudgel or the pistol. Those who did not think as these strange representatives of the intellect

<sup>1</sup> At the time the present writer contributed, under the pseudonym Ulrich Unfried, a series of articles to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (September 6, 11, and 13, 1931) entitled "*Die Intellektuellen und der 'Kapitalismus,'*" in which he duly stigmatized the irresponsible activities of the *Tat* group. As chance would have it, the first of these articles was immediately preceded by a paragraph reporting the dismissal of the whole of the subordinate teaching staff of the Prussian secondary schools! Without this state of physical distress of the intellectual proletariat it is scarcely possible to understand the poisonous effect of such propaganda as that of the *Tat* group. All the graver was its responsibility.

did must, they considered, have their mouths shut. Later, when in the Third Reich persons yet more brutal applied this principle to the *Tat* or action group itself, the group recognized that mouth-shutting cannot be elevated to a principle unless one is quite sure who plays the active and who the passive part in that pastime.

These few reminiscences of that dismal time may give some idea of the atmosphere then prevalent in the leading intellectual quarters in Germany. Such were the forces that tirelessly sapped the foundations of German civilization and prepared the chaos that followed. These were the men whom we had to denounce as guilty of spiritual arson. But before the foreigner bursts out in all too righteous indignation, let us remind him that abroad there were the same groups as in Germany ready to lap up the same sort of propaganda. One of the best-known works of the *Tat* group—Ferdinand Fried's muddled book *Das Ende des Kapitalismus*—found eager and sympathizing readers in a French translation, and many were the writers in the Western countries who played the same tune. What is still more serious is that in Great Britain and elsewhere today such a book as Carr's *Conditions of Peace* should have had a remarkable reception, although it corresponds in many respects to the German pattern of the *Tat* group. Indeed, it even seems as if this book is only a particularly striking symptom of a much broader current that has been noted today in Britain by attentive observers.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Carr belongs to an English university. In Germany also, and, indeed, in Switzerland, where the university professor has always had exceptional standing, even more than elsewhere, it was from the universities that most of the other intellectuals drew the disintegrating poison that they then distributed, duly packed and processed, to the mass of the people. This is not the place for drawing the portrait of the German professor who became generations ago in so many faculties the caricature of any intellectual leader of integrity—a specialist with no political sense but any amount of self-confidence and usually a bad temper. As a rule the professor of this type was a splendid worker

<sup>2</sup> Cf. again Hayek's book already mentioned.



and often a master in his special field, but he became a pre-tentious idiot the moment he blundered into vital questions of the state and society. That type of professor was always ready to hold a stirrup for the government, whether by expounding the economic basis of Bismarck's protectionism, or by supporting a saber-rattling policy in foreign affairs, or by furthering the propaganda of the German Navy League, or by defending the unrestricted U-boat warfare, or finally by burning incense at the altar of Nazism. Here again we are concerned only with indicating the last stages of this betrayal of the mind and placing our finger on the almost inexpiable guilt of many German university professors in preparing people's minds for the Nazi hordes, and later, when Nazism put their courage as intellectual leaders to the test, proving ready, in good faith or bad, to palliate its assaults on culture and law and morality and to swallow its absurdest theories and even sing their praises. This is a harsh accusation, but it comes in this book from one of those very professors, who in his long years in German universities had the best of opportunities of studying the work of this type of professional politicaster and noting its appalling influence on academic youth. The writer knows, too, from his own experience, the difficulty the others, the honorable type, had in holding their own in this stuffy atmosphere. The academic freedom that progressive governments were at pains to respect had indeed become here more and more a charter for irresponsibles.

It is particularly disgraceful for the German universities that it was there that the method of the base appeal to the mob first made its way in the form of anti-Semitism, and with ever growing success. At the end of the nineteenth century, Theodor Mommsen, in his public controversy with the anti-Semitic Treitschke, had made a strong effort, to his great credit, to stave off the beginning of the movement, speaking for an earlier and nobler Germany; but later there was no opposition of equal weight. No observer with any but a myopic vision could deny the existence of a very grave Jewish question, and in Germany it had become more and more critical in the last generation in particular; but this is no excuse for the coarse anti-Semitism

that became more and more dominant in the German universities. I had experienced myself of the length to which anti-Semitism had been carried, when I tried once to point out to my colleagues, at a general meeting of professors, the great services done by Jewry for the German language and culture in eastern and southern Europe—with the result that I found my position as professor at Marburg University most seriously affected. Now that this anti-Semitism has worked immeasurable harm to Germany, it is to be hoped that most of the German professors will have realized where that course has landed them.

In order to give as vivid an impression as possible of the atmosphere prevalent in the German universities in those years of the germination of National Socialism, I will speak once more of a personal experience; for it is indeed necessary to have lived in Germany at that time to be able fully to understand the origin of the Third Reich. My story goes back to the days of the so-called Kapp Putsch of 1920, the first uprising of Pan-Germanism after the war. At that time the Weimar government was still in a position to deal with the business quickly and thoroughly. I was then a student at Marburg University. In those critical days there had been formed at the university a committee of democratic, socialist, and Catholic students, together with leading professors of theology (Martin Rade, Rudolf Otto, Heinrich Hermelinck), to grapple with the menace arising from the reactionary students' associations, which had been secretly armed. The railwaymen, who had struck in answer to the Putsch, assembled a special train for us, which took us to Kassel to see the general officer commanding the Reichswehr. When we had represented to him how threatening the situation was in Marburg, the General gave us a reply that was typical of the attitude of Army circles at the moment—that the situation had entirely changed, since a Communist rising had broken out in Thuringia, against which the Marburg students ought to be sent in a solid body. "Red hordes are marching through the country, murdering and setting fire to everything." That was the new story. On this we students who

were loyal to the government demanded that we, too, should be armed as an independent formation—the “Volkskompagnie Marburg”—and conveyed to Thuringia. There we were witnesses of a dreadful tragedy that gave us for all time a conception of what we had to expect from those of the students who then and later set the tone. On occupying the small industrial town of Ruhla we had found the “Communists” perfectly orderly; but we learned that on the previous day the reactionary corps of students, under an ex-naval officer who belonged to a Prussian Junker family, had kidnaped fifteen workmen from a neighboring village and murdered them while under transport—“shot while attempting to escape,” as the cynical formula already ran. And only a few days earlier I had been in charge of the guard in the Wartburg, where with the captain of the Burg, von Cranach (a descendant of Lucas Cranach, the great German painter of the time of the Reformation), I had given myself up until late at night to the magic of a great German past.

We accumulated evidence of the facts from all around, aroused German public opinion, and succeeded in getting those responsible brought before the courts. Not only, however, did the authors of the crime remain unpunished, but it was on us, and on the professors of theology I have named, that the hatred and anger of the dominant groups of professors and students in the university fell. Thereafter, anyone who had been on our side in this affair was a marked man—and not the students who had committed an abominable crime. This state of things remained unchanged down to the start of the Third Reich, and nothing better illustrates the growth of savagery out of which that satanic regime proceeded. If today in Germany there are professors who declare that they never did anything to help criminals into power, let them recall among other things that “tragedy of Mechterstädt.” We have not forgotten it.

It was here, too, at the German universities, that in the lecture rooms, among the associations, and at every opportunity that offered, there were cultivated *a brutal nationalism, a stupid national pride, an unreasoning hatred of the victor powers, and an inhuman contempt for international law.* It was here that a

war of revenge was most energetically preached, and the way thus prepared for the triumph of Nazism. Here the young students were systematically fed on lies and trained in unreason. It was the University of Berlin that at that time placed on its war memorial the inscription "*Invictis victi victuri*"—"To the unconquered the conquered who will conquer"—and it was a professor of theology (Seeberg) that invented this.

Naturally the faculties of social science provided a special opportunity for practicing intellectual treachery and preparing the way for Nazism. Thus it is mainly the names of jurists and philosophers that could here be given. In Germany there were, indeed, few faculties of law that were not filled with the spirit of obdurate antiliberalism, antidemocratism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism, and it was this spirit that was thus carried into the life of the country by those who later became judges, administrative officials, and lawyers. It was in these faculties that the saps were pushed forward that undermined the edifice of the Weimar Republic, weak as it was in any case. In these faculties was forged in every possible variant the theory of the antiliberal total state—by a Berlin professor named Smend, who invented for it the name of "sociological state," by the Bonn professor Carl Schmitt, who later played so sinister a part, by the Viennese professor Othmar Spann, and by many of less note. All these teachings fell on a soil that had been most efficiently prepared by such "muck spreaders" as Spengler's brilliant but perverse *Decline of the West*.

It can be said to the honor of the German economists that the part they played up to the start of the Third Reich was far less pernicious than that of the jurists. It may even be claimed that the great majority of them remained loyal to the spirit of social understanding and of comprehensive assessment in which that science, when it is pursued with a genuine regard for economic and social facts, gives special training. In addition to this the younger generation of German economists was seeking at that time with energy and understanding and impartiality a return to the tradition of the strict economic doctrine that had suffered eclipse under the dominance of the historical school.

If there was any faculty in which a breath of the liberal spirit was to be found, it was the faculty of economics, and this accounted for the emphasis with which this group of professors fought against the economic doctrines of Nazism, and especially against the insane system of autarchy. There were exceptions, some of them of the worst sort, such as Othmar Spann, already mentioned, and Werner Sombart, who had much in common with him in character and mentality. Sombart had already given evidence of his quality during the First World War in his unspeakable pamphlet *Händler und Helden* ("Traders and Heroes"); and later, in his book *Deutscher Sozialismus* (1934), he supplied a model collection of pet theories of Nazism. These writers were seconded by a bevy of lesser spirits, whose names may be permitted to fall into oblivion.

There were many grave lapses among the representatives of medicine and of the natural sciences (with the creditable exception of a few individuals and branches), and the general atmosphere of the medical faculties often exceeded that of the legal faculties in unintelligence. The philologists and the historians maintained the good tradition for the longest time, though here, too, there was no lack of professors whose honest work in their own field did not prevent them from making most unfortunate excursions into politics. It is true that the average historians did not renounce their devotion to the neo-Prussian tradition, and certainly in this field there were plenty of preachers of the balddest nationalism who felt themselves to be epigoni of Treitschke. German historical science was no less indisputably influenced by the tendency to a certain naturalism that began with Ranke; we shall have more to say about this tendency, which contributed immensely to creating the general mental atmosphere in which Nazism first became possible. Finally, there was scarcely a single German historian who was able to judge with the impartiality of the universal historical outlook the development of Greater Prussia since 1866, still less the origin and course of the First World War. But it is difficult to discover any prominent historian who so directly prepared the way for Nazism as did professors of constitutional law or of political science. As

for the philologists, many of them, particularly the specialists in the Romance and Anglo-Saxon languages, can be referred to only in terms of deep respect. To mention only one example, it must not be forgotten that Ernst Robert Curtius, in his book *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* ("German Spirit in Danger"), published in 1932, courageously and energetically set himself against the fatal process already far advanced; while no one familiar with the subject need be reminded of the importance of Karl Vossler's work. Even in Germanic philology the strict scientific discipline that philology especially inculcates kept most of its students clear of nationalist cultural charlatanry. Here again a single name may stand for many, that of the Berlin Germanic scholar Konrad Burdach, who had the courage to tell the Germans plainly that in the Middle Ages they had had no truly national culture, and that Middle High German epic poetry was mainly an art of translation from the French.<sup>8</sup> Neither must it be forgotten that the eminent philosopher Karl Jaspers (Heidelberg University) had challenged in 1932 the evil spirit of the times in his book on *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* ("The Spiritual Situation of the Times") with a courage that never failed him afterward throughout the tribulations of the Third Reich.

In spite of all bright spots, the general picture we have had to draw of the influence of the German professors down to the Third Reich remains dark enough, and we hope their best representatives will agree with us when we conclude that a great load of responsibility has here been incurred. But the responsibility grows to infinite dimensions when we examine the behavior of the German professors after 1933.

The Nazis knew only too well that the German universities were among the strongholds it was most important for them to capture if they were to gain the indispensable dominance over the German soul—a stronghold scarcely less important than the churches. Accordingly they left no stone unturned to gain this end, and where they had no success with intimidation or brutality they tried persuasion or transparent indulgence. Here again I can speak from my own experience. In the spring of

<sup>8</sup> Konrad Burdach, *Deutsche Renaissance*, 1920.

1933 I was deprived of my post as professor at Marburg University. I was thus declared an "enemy of the people," and was also treated as one by not a few of my colleagues. To the obvious astonishment of the Nazis, I did not take the slightest step to get back into their good graces and gain readmission to the company of *Volksgenossen*, or "national comrades." Instead of showing the obviously expected penitence, I took every opportunity of challenging the Nazis in every way I could. It was obviously as a result of this attitude that one day two SS men—of thorough "bruiser" type—came to see me in order to explain politely to me that after all my proper place was really with them. I could not resist the temptation in replying to them to give vent to my scorn and indignation; but the moment they had gone away crestfallen I realized that I must now get across the frontier at once. But even at my first place of exile, with friends in Holland, a Nazi emissary came to see me in order to give me a flattering invitation to return home in honor.

In Italy many university professors refused to take the oath to fascism and bravely held their ground. In Germany the number of professors who lost their posts after 1933 through being true to their convictions was exceedingly small. Most of the professors then dismissed under a so-called "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" (which, of course, in reality undermined it) were victims of the racial legislation. It is impossible to say what they would otherwise have done; but to judge from the attitude of those Jewish professors who at first imagined themselves to be safe on account of their special standing, and who often looked down contemptuously on their dismissed colleagues, Jew or Gentile, there seems ground for a good deal of skepticism.

In view of all this it is not to be wondered at that after the Nazis had tricked their way into power the representatives of learning in general behaved with what can be described only as either cowardice or cynical opportunism or mental and moral perversion. Even in those branches of knowledge that had shown themselves capable of resistance so far, there now came a collapse that for years made an end of any usefulness of the universities

as a mental and moral counterweight to the official barbarism, and it seemed as if, now that there was no longer any need for self-restraint, they were going over to the lowbrow camp with flags flying. It was a scene of prostitution that has stained the honorable history of German learning, and represents one of the worst and most fateful examples of group responsibility.

Here again justice certainly demands that we should set certain limits to our condemnation; once more we must be careful not to be too summary in our verdict. On the one hand there were cases of brave resistance, standing out all the more brightly from the poor record of the majority, cases that ended—if nothing worse happened—with the silent disappearance of not a few scholars of high repute, while those who now set the tone were brought so much the more into the foreground. On the other hand, the general picture was falsified, by no means to the benefit of traditional learning, by the fact that everywhere worthless fanatics, careerists, incapable young lecturers, or purely partisan “intellectuals,” men who had never caught a breath of the true spirit of science, occupied the professorial chairs so ardently aspired to, gained control of the journals, wrote new approved textbooks, carried on the learned societies, and represented the German universities in relation to the outer world. In a sense there was repeated on a small scale in the universities what had happened to the German nation as a whole: they were driven into active or passive complicity, but they must not be judged on the same basis as those who had done the driving.

The general picture, however, was most depressing. This applies especially to the cases, unfortunately by no means few, in which former socialists, democrats, or liberals not only capitulated miserably, but even gave active service in the former enemy ranks, trying to bury their past in oblivion by means of an undignified display of zeal. We cannot refrain here from mentioning these unfortunate lapses; on the other hand, the utmost respect is due to the courage of many former democrats. Equal esteem is due to the old Alfred Weber, professor of sociology at Heidelberg (and brother of the late Max Weber), who



in 1933 had the courage to haul down the swastika flag single-handed from the university building, and who remained adamant to the end. The Berlin philosopher Eduard Spranger also deserves mention here, though it has to be said that he showed weakness at the beginning of the Third Reich. According to the report of a Swiss national who was present, he had the spirit to begin a lecture on Socrates and Plato in the ruins of Berlin with the following words: "In the midst of this great world conflagration let our thoughts rest on those figures of old who have been shining examples down to our own time. They laid the foundations of Western culture, for the retention or rejection of which nations are struggling with one another today." He is an example of those professors who in the end made up for their complicity at the beginning of the Third Reich by courageous testimony to the insight they had gained. Among those who have been like him or even have been unwavering in their courageous opposition to the Nazi regime let us mention at least men like the sociologist Leopold von Wiese, the sociologist Alfred von Martin, the historian Franz Schnabel, the philosophers Karl Jaspers and Ebbinghaus, the eminent professor of law Hallstein (now rector of the University of Frankfurt), the physicist Joost, and the mathematician Reidemeister.

In accordance with the totalitarian character of the new regime, there was scarcely a single branch of learning on which Nazism did not try to set its stamp—there were even a "German" mathematics and a "German" physics—but, naturally, certain fields were especially imperiled. These included, above all, jurisprudence, economics, history, and certain branches of medicine. They were made instruments of the state and its ideology to such an extent that very few professors had the courage, the strength of character, and the high intellectual capacity not merely for keeping silent but actually for assuring the undeviating progress of their honest scientific labor. Among these mention should be made of the economists Walter Eucken (Freiburg), Constantin von Dietze (Freiburg), Wilhelm Gehlhoff (Brunswick), and Wilhelm Gerloff (Frankfurt). As for history, it provided striking confirmation of the dictum of Edgar

Quinet: "*Dans la servitude rien ne se corrompt si vite que l'histoire*"<sup>4</sup>—"Nothing, if it loses its independence, is so quickly corrupted as history." It was only through a spiritual corruption of this sort that it was largely historians, archeologists, and art critics who everywhere in the occupied countries of Europe, to the utter disgrace of learning, became mental myrmidons of the Nazis and looted archives and museums.<sup>5</sup>

We have described at this length the pernicious part played by the German universities because it shows us the process of mental and moral degeneration in the quarter from which, after the churches, the strongest resistance ought to have come. *Corruptio optimi pessima*—the German universities not only failed to stand firm but actually were among the worst centers of infection. What, then, could be expected of the other intellectuals, especially the *judges* and the *secondary school masters*? Like academic freedom, the independence of the judges was meticulously respected by the republican governments, though many judges grossly abused it, especially those who had to deal with criminal or civil cases of a political character. Scarcely one of the offenses that revealed the spirit of the later Nazism was adequately punished (the tragedy of Mechterstädt was only one of countless examples), and the jurisdiction in issues of a political character was to an appalling degree plain and open flouting of the German state, which tried desperately to defend itself against this spate of nihilism. Have the German judges, too, learned the fearful lesson, after making their contribution to the triumph of Nazism? Have they realized that the independence of the judiciary is a constitutional asset that brooks no abuse?

<sup>4</sup> Edgar Quinet, *L'esprit nouveau*, 3rd edition, Paris, 1875, p. 187. Quinet adds on the next page: "*Les esprits, même philosophiques, ont de peine à se soustraire aux enseignements de la force criminelle, dès qu'elle parle avec arrogance*"—"Even those with the philosophic mind escape with difficulty from the teachings of criminal force, so soon as it speaks with arrogance."

<sup>5</sup> One of the worst cases is reported in the official document *The Nazi Kultur in Poland*, published by the Stationery Office in 1945 for the Polish Ministry of Information. Cf. also P. Francastel, *L'histoire de l'art, instrument de la propagande germanique*, Paris, 1945.

The subversive work of the judges was largely carried on in the full glare of publicity. Not so the work of the schoolmasters. It is very difficult to estimate the quantity of poison administered day by day to the growing generation in the German schools. The masters' classical education had not trained them in humanity. Unfortunately, there is plenty of evidence that here, too, an evil seed was sown, despite the praiseworthy efforts of a minority of exemplary teachers.

On top of this condemnation of the German professors, judges, and schoolmasters, must we adduce the shameful examples of the apostasy of artists? The task is all the more repugnant since it would be difficult to discover any prominent German poets, painters, sculptors, actors, or musicians who showed themselves entirely inaccessible to the courtship of the regime.

Finally, as regards the tragedy of the German *press*, we could do it justice only in a lengthy special account. Naturally the Nazi government, like every other totalitarian system, had to bring the whole press under its control as quickly and as completely as possible, in order to assure itself of one of the principal instruments for dominating and misleading public opinion, and naturally no opposition could prevent it from following the example of Italian fascism and appropriating the whole newspaper system by force or fraud and placing compliant editors in charge. Thus in the twinkling of an eye all the German newspapers were turned into organs of Nazism, playing the same tune shrilly or softly on their various instruments. Individual nuances were still to be observed in the first years, but these reflected the unresolved problems of control within the regime, where they were not simply intended to throw sand into the eyes of foreign observers. It was due to these conditions that, above all, the old-established and respected *Frankfurter Zeitung* was able to maintain a special character that at least was more or less civilized, and so was able to remain fairly readable to a great extent even when its opposite numbers in Berlin were already competing with the *Völkischer Beobachter*. It was depressing to see how even the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which at first

had honorably tried not to be entirely untrue to its famous tradition, and which smuggled into its columns many a forceful sentence against Nazism, was slowly but steadily throttled. One would have been glad to see it come to a glorious end in 1933. But for reasons that it will only later become possible fully to disclose, it was condemned to be slowly corrupted until at last, when it no longer seemed to be of any use even in this form, it was put out of its misery. Worst of all was the fact that even in this case, the best in the German newspaper world, the members of the editorial staff themselves took part in the corruption of their paper. It is indeed true that the staffs of many other newspapers did much worse. Here again, the record in Nazi Germany was probably worse than in Fascist Italy.

#### INTELLECTUAL RESISTANCE

All these reproaches affect the leaders of intellectual life in Germany in two ways. Against the very worst they are a charge of having paved the way for barbarism, long before its eruption in 1933, and a different charge against those who showed cowardice and stupidity after the trick that set barbarism in the saddle. We have already stated the extenuating circumstances that in justice have to be admitted. It would also be thoroughly pharisaical if the world were no longer willing to bear in mind that lack of character, the conforming spirit, and opportunism seem unfortunately to be a general characteristic of our epoch, and it was precisely the class of university professors that failed, and not only in Germany, when the need came for courageous defense of the ultimate values and convictions of our civilization.<sup>6</sup> It should also not be forgotten how quickly the intellectuals outside Germany showed themselves ready to take the keenest interest in Nazism, and how many of them were easily won over by the Nazis as paid or unpaid helpers. We have not even been spared the repulsive spectacle of some of these members of the "intellectual Foreign Legion" of Nazism turning later into thoroughly unfair denouncers of Germany.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Röpke, *Civitas humana*, Erlenbach-Zurich, 1944, pp. 191 ff. (English translation shortly to be published by W. Hodge & Co., London.)

These same demands of justice compel us further to insist on the fact that after those first fateful years of the Third Reich there came an undoubted change among the German intellectuals, which indicated a continuing process of courageous reflection and self-assertion after the catastrophe had come for which generations of decadent and irresponsible writers had prepared the way. Just as the epidemic was preceded by a long period of intellectual incubation, it may very well have been precisely the German intellectuals who first came to their senses, who were the first to be filled with acute horror of the reality that some of them had foreseen in desolate dreams, and who realized the path that of necessity, when a certain philosophy was carried to the last extreme, led to Oradour-sur-Glane, to Maidanek, and to the devastation of the cities of Europe. True as it is that these intellectuals were infected for a period, shorter or longer, with Nazism, or may have sailed with the wind through lack of character, it would be wrong to suppose that they were permanently converted to Nazism and had sunk to the level of party functionaries. It may, indeed, fairly be said that, if the great majority of them ever really succumbed to the poisonous influence of Nazism, they had since for a considerable time been actively trying to get rid of it.

This was the more noteworthy since the war into which Nazism had driven Germany had naturally, as everywhere else, and as at all times, a strong integrating effect, of which we have already spoken, and placed every intellectual under the temptation to identify himself, at least "for the duration," with the regime. This was all the more to be expected since, in a tragically vicious circle, the Allied powers in their exasperation seemed to envisage for the Germans a fate that would make them suffer for the deeds of the regime. Thus the German intellectuals must have traveled very far when many of them, in spite of their divided feelings, preferred to see their country's fall rather than the continuance of the regime. I know a German professor who, when he learned of Rudolf Hess's flight to Scotland, brought one of his last bottles of Rhine wine from his cellar, to celebrate an event that seemed to him to portend the end of the war. If

anyone does not see at once what that implies, let him try to imagine a German professor doing the same thing if the German Crown Prince had flown to England in 1917. Everybody will agree that the idea is unthinkable, and this throws a strong light on the fundamental contrast between then and now. It makes, of course, no difference that my professor had mistaken the true character of Hess's escapade. And what are we to think of another good conservative intellectual, who had the courage to write to me during the war that there was nothing to be seen in the streets any longer but the "horrible uniforms"? Would he have written that in 1918?

All this does not in the least alter the fact that many German intellectuals have loaded themselves with an enormous responsibility. The thing that matters, however, is that probably some of them would actually contradict us if we had any idea of trying to find excuses for them. It is this that shows the moral revolution of which we shall have later to speak particularly.

Even in the worst years after Nazism sneaked into power, there was no doubt that many German intellectuals were succeeding in combining a temporary weakness toward Nazism with an astonishing general culture. They saved that general culture during the inferno, and preserved it as a precious stock that is among the few assets that remain to Germany after the war, a stock with which a new start could be made. Anyone who has watched the new publications in the German book market since 1933—apart, of course, from party literature—and the more intellectually discriminating periodicals would have had to be blind to fail to recognize their high level. There have been real masterpieces of genuine scholarship and fine book-making among them, fat volumes like the *Handbuch der Weltliteratur* ("Handbook of World Literature"), a masterly work of its sort, by Hans W. Eppelsheimer, who was not allowed to know anything about Thomas Mann, but did justice to Heine; or Egon von Eickstedt's comprehensive and thoroughly scientific *Rassengeschichte der Menschheit* ("History of the Races of Mankind"), published in 1937 and now in a second edition; books such as F. Schnabel's *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten*

*Jahrhundert* ("German History in the Nineteenth Century"), of which three volumes have been issued since 1934, a book everyone will read with pleasure and profit; and finally the excellent collections of masterpieces of world literature (Kröners Taschenausgaben, Dietrichsche Sammlung, Inselbücherei, etc.). Admirable editions in Greek and German of the pre-Socratic philosophers were published, and though, indeed, none of the party officials read them and no SS man ever heard of them, they were eagerly bought by a wide educated public and gave evidence of a very comforting continuity of German culture. The interest in the cultivation and spread of the cultural tradition of the ancient classics was almost greater than ever.

French literature was placed in various ways before the educated German public, with gratifying objectivity and in an unmistakable effort to present thereby all that is common to the European peoples; and the same applies to English literature. Meanwhile the cultivation of the German classics was not neglected, and it is significant that Adalbert Stifter himself, a writer as remote as could be from the spirit of the day, was published in carefully prepared editions. Even Stifter's *Lesebuch zur Förderung humaner Bildung*, published in 1854, appeared in a facsimile of the first edition, and this was not mere respect for tradition but part of a rebel program.

To complete the picture we may mention the mass of art books, which no more betrayed the regime under which they were appearing than did the books already mentioned. Here, too, there was a clear fundamental tendency—to turn away to the heritage of the past and to pay homage to the universal scales of value. It is significant of this tendency that poets of the classic and romantic traditions continued to write, even if, like Ernst Wiechert, they had to pay for their courage with their freedom. That truly Christian literature continued in full course need scarcely be said. Thus the impression might be gained that under the National Socialists the German intellectuals largely remained as they had always been, with their great and, indeed, fatal weaknesses, but also with their achievements and with a cultural tradition that deserves respect. It was only

the very complex character of the German mind that enabled the intellectuals to preserve this tradition without openly breaking with Nazism.

In this continuity one may see at once a sort of opposition, if only passive. But it is significant and encouraging that some of the German intellectuals—the number is difficult to estimate—had for years no longer contented themselves with the mere preservation of intellectual continuity but had gone from passive to active opposition. That little is known of this, as a rule, outside Germany is due, of course, mainly to the fact that these movements of intellectual resistance could only be noiseless undercurrents, of which everyone in Germany became aware at once, but rarely anyone outside the country. It should, however, be mentioned here as of general knowledge that intellectual life in Germany, even before the ultimate wild excesses of the final phase of Nazism, had been so shackled that Fascist Italy had seemed in comparison almost a paradise of freedom. No one who cared for life and liberty could dare in Germany to write for a single day with the freedom of Benedetto Croce in his review *La critica*, Luigi Einaudi in his *Rivista di storia economica*, or certain authors in the *Giornale degli economisti*.

But the thing that nevertheless was attempted in Germany until a few years ago was so astonishing that people asked themselves how it could be possible under the very nose of the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. There is every reason for us to raise our hats with deep respect to the pluck thus evidenced. There is all the more reason for doing so since the most courageous—such men as the distinguished editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, Rudolf Pechel, and several of his staff—after they had long stood up openly for the fundamental principles of civilization and humanity, fell victims to the concentration camp, with the imminent danger of which they had had to reckon every day. To this *Rundschau* group belonged the ill-starred Dr. Goerdeler, who was executed, after the attempted coup d'état of July 20, 1944, in the same brutal way as the generals in the conspiracy. We may recall that Dr. Goerdeler lost his office as chief mayor of Leipzig in 1933 because he



had the courage to oppose the demolition of the memorial to Mendelssohn.

When I think of all these men, and when I look through the old numbers of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, I really do not know where at any time in the war greater gallantry was shown than here, the gallantry of the individual who had not fame and honor to expect but certain destruction, and who was surrounded by no warm comradeship but only by a silent group of unknown though grateful readers. That review, of which I am here making special mention, was well known to all the intellectual leaders in Germany and felt by them to be a refreshing oasis in the desert around them—until in the end the *Rundschau*, too, was brutally silenced. It was the pattern for publications that could be read with pleasure and profit by any educated person in any country, representing the best heritage not only of German but of Western culture, and again and again astonishing us all by its extreme boldness and its expertness in the art of subtle implication. Whoever read it could not but gain the conviction that there was an intellectual elite of deep seriousness in Germany, rejecting with loathing all tyranny and cruelty and lawlessness, regarding war as a frightful catastrophe, searching all civilization for the eternal treasures of the mind, clinging to every German name of the past and the present that could fill it with comfort and with pride and could still be openly mentioned, drawing refreshment alike from Horace and from George Washington or Montesquieu, and fighting with profound Christian conviction against nihilism, fatalism, and the cult of force.

Such publications had developed a mastery of the art that the gunner describes as "indirect fire," selecting for their purpose entirely remote events, or perhaps Louis XIV or Napoleon. Under this remarkable type of camouflage it had been possible to publish not only protests against the persecutions of the Jews but even a very positive appreciation of Mr. Churchill—in Germany in the very midst of the Nazi war. The men of this group were true to the principle laid down by Wilhelm Raabe during the period of Prussian saber-rattling after 1871—"It has always been a privilege of decent people in disturbed times to keep to

themselves, rather than prudently shout with the crowd as rogues among rogues."

The size and importance of this little group must not, of course, be overestimated. But does it really mean so little that thousands of professors, judges, schoolmasters, writers, industrialists, and landowners belonged to that group? And can it really have been so small a group if certain books rapidly went through edition after edition, and when in the end they became unobtainable were actually copied out by hand? I may mention as a random example the collection first published in 1935 of the letters of Jakob Burckhardt, which are, indeed, among the most refreshing in recent German literature, and which must have been read if one is to realize what it means for the book to have had a big sale. I may also mention Alfred von Martin's *Nietzsche und Burckhardt*, a book that takes a clear stand against Nietzsche and for Burckhardt, and seems to have been a comfort to countless readers—or Walter Eucken's *Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie*. The same may be said of the publications in belles-lettres, which kept aloof from the prostituted propaganda literature and in contrast to it were distinguished by a high average level.

The main tendencies of the thought of this intellectual elite may be summarized as follows:

(1) Rejection of totalitarianism and its various characteristics (lack of freedom, lawlessness, imperialism, dependence on the masses, collectivization, and dishonesty). This, of course, could not be given direct expression, but it could be revealed by the unambiguous attitude to historically or geographically remote examples and by the emphasized preference for writers who defended Christian, liberal, democratic, individualistic, and humanist principles against the new barbarism. Plain conclusions could also be drawn from the publication of books describing the terrorist regime of the French Revolution. A high point was reached by the article already mentioned on the South American dictator López. In the same issue of the *Deutsche Rundschau* (April 1941) an idealized picture was painted of the old Germanic democracy, of which this was said: "The leader [*Führer*]

had to bring conviction in argument and counterargument, as the free expression of opinion was an unquestioned right of every free man.... The king of the Germanic peoples was no god upon earth; he was subject to the freest criticism. This was in contrast to the rulers of Eastern peoples, who were deified by flatterers." All these tendencies were illustrated by the fact that sympathetic attention was paid to the defeated opponents of the great despots of world history. Characteristic, for instance, was Werner Jaeger's book *Demosthenes* (1939), and similarly the rediscovery of Cato, Talleyrand, Constantin Frantz, and Mme de Staël. There were printed with grim satisfaction the memoirs of Mme de Rémusat concerning Napoleon, from which Jakob Burckhardt had drawn, and it was not forgotten to invite attention to this passage of close interest to every German: "Thus it was a long time before we realized that every conquest merely added a new link to the chain that shackled our liberties. When we had become aware of the mania this orgy had produced, it was too late to offer resistance: the army had become the accomplice of the tyranny, and would have seen in the cry for liberation nothing but sedition." This was precisely the situation in which a German found himself.

It would be impossible fully to understand how the German intellectuals were able to venture on this course, so long as they were able to use their pens at all, if we did not bear in mind that since the beginning of the war against Russia the German people had had to suffer such terrible sacrifices that their mental attitude to war and death had completely changed. Clemenceau once made the profound remark that the German has a most peculiar attitude to death, almost amorous, but this is certainly only true of a theory adopted by the German in a fundamental romanticism and mysticism until now ineradicable. This is certainly bad enough, and is one of the main reasons why the average modern German had thought of war and battle with so much more disturbing lightheartedness than other peoples with a healthier outlook. Yet, must not any human being abandon this theory in face of the ghastly reality of modern massacre and bombing, exchanging it for a normal human fear of death

and the normal human horror of mass murder? To that feeling Matthias Claudius gave eloquent expression in his war poem <sup>7</sup>—which has characteristically been banned in the German schools since Bismarck's day. The change had already been observable during the First World War. In 1914 the German students' regiments had gone singing to their death at Langemarck, and young men had volunteered in masses for the *frischfröhlicher Krieg*, the "brisk and merry" war; but very soon all that was changed. The volunteer became a strange figure no longer understood by the other soldiers; he was supposed to have "wanted war"—and the "brisk and merry" soldier of 1914 turned into the deeply serious, grimly determined "trench pig" who did his duty and regarded the *Heimatschuss*, the wound just bad enough to get him home, as the height of good fortune. It is scarcely too much to say that the German army in the west in 1918 consisted entirely of men who at bottom were pacifists or at all events could have been turned into pacifists in a moment. It seems as if now, at all events among the older men, a similar change has taken place in recent years—in proportion as the Third Reich consisted more and more of the dead and their relatives. The soldiers were saying in November 1918 that the defeat had really been a bit of luck, "as otherwise we should

<sup>7</sup> This poem by Matthias Claudius, of Hamburg (1740-1815), begins:

's ist Krieg! 's ist Krieg! O Gottes Engel wehre,  
Und rede du darein!  
's ist leider Krieg—und ich begehre  
Nicht schuld daran zu sein!

and ends:

Was hilf mir Kron und Land und Gold und Ehre?  
Die könnten mich nicht freun!  
's ist leider Krieg—und ich begehre  
Nicht schuld daran zu sein!

('Tis war! 'Tis war! O angel of God, defend us,  
And do thou intervene!  
'Tis war, alas—and mine  
Be not the guilt for it!

(Crown, country, gold, and honor—would they help?  
They could bring me no joy!  
'Tis war, alas—and mine  
Be not the guilt for it!)

soon have had to stand to attention in front of every letter box," and it has been stated that in recent years this sort of grim humor became popular again in Germany, so far as it was not overborne by anxiety about the peace plans of the Allies. One of the most pronounced feelings I have found among the German ex-soldiers is a ferocious hatred of militarism, officers' arrogance, drilling sergeants, Prussian discipline, and war. However confused their political ideas in other respects are, on this one point of militarism they seem to have definitely made up their minds.

(2) This anxiety about the inevitable catastrophe, in which the just and the unjust would have to suffer alike, found expression in recent years not only in private conversation but again and again in print in more or less veiled form. It was plainly visible in the passage about the dictator of Paraguay already quoted. The same astonishing *Deutsche Rundschau* wrote in its issue of August 1941: "It is a harsh law of history that every nation has to suffer for its regime, even when it was compelled to put up with it by inhuman sufferings and inconceivable terrorism." Such allusions were to be met with again and again, perhaps with reference to Louis XIV or to Napoleon, and even a philological analysis of the *Persians* of Aeschylus provided the opportunity for them. We may assume that the fear of what was to come was bound up not only with a sense of guilt but also with some slight hope that this time the catastrophe might involve the rulers and the people in differing measure.

(3) The economic and social views of this group of intellectual leaders were difficult to grasp because, as everywhere, they were probably still very confused. We may say definitely, however, that not a few of them took less and less delight in economic planning, socialism, and collectivism, and began to rediscover the inestimable value of the liberal economic outlook. No thoughtful person, even among those associated with the regime, could escape the impressive object lesson of a collectivist economic system, and even among the working class it was reported that the question was being asked: What is the actual difference between such a system and the Communist system?

The masters of propaganda and of mass psychology enthroned in Moscow knew only too well why they permitted the "free committee" of Germans there to place "a free economic system" on their program, bizarre as this must seem to anyone with knowledge of the facts. In this connection mention should also be made of the great interest aroused by the courageous defense of a competitive economic system by Walter Eucken and his group, and the echo produced by my own writings—especially *Die Lehre der Wirtschaft* and *Die Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart*—in spite of the extraordinary difficulties of getting hold of them in Germany.

(4) With a certain renaissance of economic liberalism was associated a tendency sharply opposed to the collectivist aims of Nazism. There was constant evidence of disgust with the colossal, with mass organization and dragooning, and a longing for a "simpler existence" (Ernst Wiechert), for decentralization, for the small groups within range of a man's vision, for security far away from mammoth concerns, great cities, and the Moloch of the State, for release from the unendurable collective existence of the termite state, for gardens, for houses instead of flats, for peace and privacy—among the workers as among other classes. All this means that the cult of the colossal began to lose popularity in the very country that had carried it, like everything else, to excess, and people who had been driven by immoderation sought to return to the golden mean. In addition to this, it became clear to every thoughtful person how mendacious and how contrary to the true nature of the peasantry the Nazi cult of the peasant had been; for the one thing of which such a totalitarian, collectivist state can least of all make use is naturally an independent peasantry rooted in the land. And perhaps nothing was more significant or more hopeful than the fact that in the midst of the inferno of the Third Reich leading intellectuals discovered, apparently for the first time, how dubious a figure is the so-called "Faustian man," of whom so much had been made, whose praises had but recently been sung by Spengler, and for whom in Germany, as also in Fascist Italy, the name of "dynamic" man had been invented. It was now suddenly

found how empty and senseless is action for the mere sake of action, and Goethe's tragedy, which had lent its name to this type of man, was at last given its right interpretation: It is Satan himself with whose help Faust, at the end of his restless life, trampled down the simple human happiness of Philemon and Baucis in order to enjoy "the blessedness of command" and to erect his colossal buildings.

In harmony with this profound revulsion of thought was the effort to return to the old and tried sources of wisdom and humanity, above all to Christianity and the classics. This explains why the ancient Greek and Roman literature seemed to be enjoying a popularity unknown before in Germany. It is well known that since the beginning of the nineteenth century classical philology has had very great achievements to its credit in Germany and has for a long time virtually held the lead; but it had always been no more than a humanism of learned circles, with less influence on general culture in Germany than, for instance, in Britain or France. Thus there had been no attempt to make the classics accessible to a wider public in bilingual editions such as the Loeb Classical Library or the Collection Budé. It is striking that a few years ago a change came in this respect actually under Nazism. Various publishers, particularly Heimeran in Munich, had issued a number of parallel texts of the classics, and just at the beginning of the war a start had been made with a comprehensive collection of bilingual texts on the British and French models. But it was not only Christian and ancient literature that profited by this renaissance. Chinese philosophers, Dante, Aquinas, and the German classics were drawn upon to satisfy the intellectual hunger of readers who had suddenly found themselves, thanks to the regime and its war, faced with the ultimate problems of mankind in the most urgent way. Not without reason was there talk of a "revivifying current" in German literature and art. The very gratifying fight against the barbarization of the German language—which had been proceeding at an appalling pace under the Nazi regime of the semieducated masses—was also, perhaps, connected with these tendencies.

Every clear-sighted person will agree that these were very welcome undercurrents, permitting the hope that the German problem, which is at bottom a spiritual one, need not be insoluble. Now, the reader will scarcely need to be warned that account must be taken of the many reservations needed in offering this picture. He will in any case be inclined to say that what has been said here is too good to be true. The danger that he may read too much into it will thus not be so great as the danger that he will attach too little importance to it, or will simply disbelieve it. But perhaps I shall seem more entitled to belief when I myself insist that these are, of course, only tendencies, true importance of which is difficult to assess.

We must return with still more caution to a final point, the most important of all. This is the question that has occupied us again and again, whether signs are already discoverable of the disappearance of the fatal "Prussian" complex among Germany's intellectual leaders—so far as we can speak of them at all as a definite group. Are they beginning to see that the *Realpolitik* to which they were so addicted was not only bad morals but bad policy? That the Bismarckian Reich was a disastrous mistake and that "blood and iron" produced an appalling harvest? That Bismarck's greatness lay, after all, if we look closely into it, merely in his being of sufficient caliber to master for a time the chaos he had himself created in home and foreign policy? That he founded a tradition that has ruined Germany at home and abroad? That the Reich he contrived was an artificial construction that could be held together only by intense and unceasing effort? That his annexation of Alsace-Lorraine began the era of armed peace in Europe? That an immoral policy cannot be exculpated by the favorite phrase of *Dämonie der Gewalt*, "the demonism of force"? That after the frightful collapse of Bismarck's work the Reich must cut its coat anew?

These are some of the principal questions the German elite must ask itself today—or so much of the elite as still exists—and only if it answers yes shall we be able to note its radical conversion. It cannot yet be confidently stated that that has happened. But one needs only to understand the language that



became necessary under the Nazi regime in Germany—like the man in the fairy tale who understood the language of the birds—to detect evidence that among the German intellectuals serious thought was given even to this particularly delicate point. It was plain that here, too, the seed had begun to sprout beneath the soil.

Even the cult of regional art, which the Nazis had incautiously fostered at the outset, was bound to work centrifugally and to reinforce the regional consciousness at the expense of the overworked cult of unity. Even the effort, observable in recent literature, to hold up a more or less idealized Prussianism as a model for the ruined generation of today was not to be despised. Moltke or Schlieffen, for instance, was presented to the German reader in such a way as to suggest the question: Where are upright and unpretentious men like that to be found today? Interesting in this connection was a book by the Freiburg historian Gerhard Ritter, *Machstaat oder Utopie?* (1940), in which Machiavelli and Sir Thomas More were contrasted in a discussion of the relation between ethics and politics.<sup>8</sup> The book is essentially a shamefaced whitewashing of Machiavellianism and of Realpolitik, but it is evident that the author is no longer comfortable about the matter. He makes play accordingly with the convenient excuse that there is indeed a *Dämonie der Macht* of which it would be hypocritical to deny the existence, and he brings this charge of hypocrisy against More, against Gladstone, and against British policy in general. A psychological analysis of this book creates the impression that the author is fundamentally troubled by deep scruples. As, however, he has not yet battled through to a real change of outlook, he tries to soothe himself and those who think with him by demonstrating that the others are no better, indeed are worse, since they are not as honest as the German Machiavellians. This sense of guilt—though still suppressed—is at least a welcome advance. It is still more gratifying to see that the *Deutsche Rundschau* in its review of the book defends More against the German writer.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also the sharp criticism in K. Thieme, *Das Schicksal der Deutschen*, Basle, 1945, pp. 114 ff.

All this was a very timid and as yet halfhearted beginning. But there were better things. Thus we noted with glad surprise that even in conservative circles there was a sign of something that had very rarely been visible in the past—a readiness for national self-criticism. Thus we found, again in the *Deutsche Rundschau* (April 1941), "Megalomania is one of the most dangerous diseases of a nation." The "subservience of the middle class" was mercilessly denounced, and the hard statement was made that "every German carries a lackey's livery in his knapsack." The vices of the Germanic heroes were ruthlessly exposed, and they were not treated by any means in the style of patriotic school primers. Further, it is not without importance that the memory was revived of eminent non-Prussian statesmen of the past, whose line of thought was entirely opposed to the Prussian tradition—such statesmen, for instance, as the Württemberger Johann Moser, who in the eighteenth century won fame by his systematization of international law, or the Hanoverian Justus Möser, whose political wisdom was highly appreciated by Goethe. All these were discreet hints that there are other German countries besides Prussia, each with its own history and tradition, which gained new luster now that the Prussian tradition was so heavily compromised. The result of them was that Nazi propaganda had to give more and more attention to combating the reawakening of regional consciousness. From these hints it was but a step to cast doubt on the desirability of great states in general and to rediscover the advantages of the small state. This again could, of course, be done only with the utmost discretion, as, for instance, in Bernhard Knauss's book *Staat und Mensch in Hellas* (1940), which aroused great interest, or in Werner Jaeger's *Demosthenes*, already mentioned.<sup>9</sup> Knauss defended the

<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the Prussian historical tradition, represented especially by Droysen and Beloch, which had glorified the forcible "unification" of Greece by the Macedonians, with an obvious side glance at Bismarck and Prussia, Jaeger and Knauss roundly declared that what had happened was the subjugation of Greece. This was naturally bound up with a rehabilitation of Demosthenes, on whom so much contempt had been poured in the past in Greater Prussia. In Knauss we find even this sentence, inconceivable at an earlier time, when it would have seemed to border on high treason: "Even the national state is nothing more than one political form among others."

particularism of the Greek city-state in a way that could be applied elsewhere as well as in Greece.

These were some of the seedlings that had come into view before complete darkness fell over the Third Reich. They were recognizable only by a trained eye, and even then it was not always possible to be sure that it was not a case of optical illusion or of the sprouting of some mere weed. Moreover, there were plenty of later events that could not fail to influence these movements of intellectual resistance. Those who a few years earlier had still been capable of strong reaction were bound since to have largely given way to hopelessness and inner collapse, of which it was difficult for the outsider to have a correct idea. When the present book was in the press in Switzerland (May 1945), it could only be expected that the intellectual leaders, the very men on whom the last hopes for the future of Germany must rest, would under the continually increasing strain on mind and nerves and body, after twelve years of such a regime, have lost much of their resilience. In addition to this, the uncertainty as to the Allied policy with regard to Germany seemed bound to reduce to deep perplexity the very classes in Germany on whom the world must now depend if it does not propose simply to place this great central country of Europe for an indefinite period under alien rule, or to transfer it to some other nihilistic mass regime. Many of Germany's intellectual leaders had already fallen victim to the latest persecutions, and one after another the voices here singled out for mention were silenced, some of them forever. Concentration camps and Gestapo dungeons were filled with university professors, clergy of all denominations, writers, and members of the independent professions, and nobody can say how many of them have lived to see the day of liberation. The very frightfulness experienced in France, Belgium, Holland, and everywhere else, and the concentration camps that fell into the hands of the Allies, have given everyone abroad a clear view of the machinery of violence to which the Germans themselves were the longest and most thoroughly subjected. Thus the reality looked more fearful than any description could paint. So much the more

necessary is it—in Europe's highest interest—to protect, to help, and to encourage the spiritual forces still surviving in Germany.

It is with this phrase that I finished this chapter about two years ago, and the appeal is still as justified today as it was then. In other respects, however, it is very fortunate that now I am able to tone down somewhat the pessimism of the preceding lines. True, the number of the German intellectuals who had been murdered by the Nazis is appalling, but we have had the immense joy of learning that some whose loss seemed to be well-nigh certain have been miraculously spared. Among these there is Dr. Pechel, who in spite of his age and his terrible experiences with the Nazi hangmen has survived the years he spent in a concentration camp. While he has started to publish again his *Deutsche Rundschau* in Berlin, he is now here with us in Switzerland to write his most valuable memoirs as almost the only survivor of the innermost circle of the German resistance movement. Fortunately, he is not the only one to have been happily rescued from the Nazi clutches. But how terribly depressed they all are by the disappointing Allied policies in Germany, and how much they need help, rest, encouragement, and food, mental and physical!

#### FINAL APPRAISAL: IS THERE A "COLLECTIVE GUILT" OF THE GERMANS?

The failure of the German intellectual before and under the Third Reich was largely the failure of that type of German whom we like to call the "Bismarck German." Without the predominance of this type, especially among the intellectuals and the other leading groups of German society, we would not understand why men of these groups had been so fatally instrumental in smoothing the way for Hitler and why most of their members encouraged in a decisive manner the new Nazi regime by a shameful attitude that at best was that of a mild reserve. At that momentous hour of history, they failed because they were prepared to help the new movement carry out its nationalistic and militaristic program and its skillful use of all the cherished symbols of the Prussian tradition. We must

not forget that most of those who later became passive or active opponents or leaders of the revolt against Hitler (including Pastor Niemöller and most of those connected with the abortive Putsch of July 20, 1944) are Bismarck Germans without whose weakness in the first years of the regime the later catastrophe would have been averted. They realized too late their terrible mistake, and if they do not recognize their immense responsibility today they ought to be reminded of it.

But the important point is that they actually did become opponents of National Socialism, some of them the fiercest and most courageous, and most of them not for any opportunist reasons but because of a resurrection of their Christian and humanitarian convictions. These, in the ultimate test, they realized to be superior to, and even antagonistic to, their former Prussian scale of values. When we run through the sad list of the victims of the Nazi hangmen and concentration camps we discover that many of those men—like the former ambassador von Hassel, the Prussian minister of finance Popitz, and hundreds of the same kind—expiated their previous mistakes in bestial executions that they braved heroically. Their development and final destiny reflect dramatically the decay of that sort of patriotism which the Bismarck German stood for and which now had revealed to the full its disastrous consequences. It is up to the other Germans and also for the rest of the world to understand the lesson given by those men.

It is this that leads us to a final examination of the question of the collective guilt of the Germans. We recognize now that we have strong reasons for being careful not to turn our highly legitimate anger against the responsible Nazis into self-righteous condemnation of the German nation in its entirety. We see instead that the problem is very complex, that it is necessary to distinguish very carefully between the different groups of Germans according to the degree of responsibility they have to bear. This very complexity of the problem does not allow us to do more here than to stress some of the principal points.

As a first approximation we should have to distinguish between three main groups of Germans: (1) the minority of the

chiefly responsible persons, whether they were party members or not; (2) the minority of proved anti-Nazis, whether they were in concentration camps or not; and (3) the overwhelming majority of the more or less meek, more or less ignorant, more or less docile, more or less stupid, in other words, the great mass of the human average who are neither scoundrels nor saints nor even remotely heroes. Within these three main groups we encounter many subgroups that it would be beyond the scope of this book to characterize. Leaving these further complications aside, we ought to agree that it would appear a just and sure guide for any reasonable and constructive treatment of the Germans to hit the first group with the utmost severity, to take off our hats to the members of the second group, feel honored by their friendship, and make them run the country, and finally to give the preponderant remainder of the Germans a chance under the joint leadership of the anti-Nazis (we say "anti-Nazis" instead of "antifascists" because we cannot include the Communists in this group if we do not want to exchange one variety of totalitarians for another) and the Allies. It would be quite wrong to believe that within this latter group old party members would not sometimes promise to become better citizens of a new democratic Germany than others who were more fortunate or more careful not to be inscribed at one time or another on the list of a Nazi organization. To have overlooked this is one of the main mistakes that have been made in the policy of "denazification" in Germany.

Another fatal mistake, responsible in large part for the present situation in Germany, has been to ignore almost completely the genuine anti-Nazis—whether they call themselves Christians, conservatives, democrats, liberals, or socialists—or to underestimate grossly their number and importance. The very existence and horrors of the concentration camps, so much exploited against the German nation as a whole, but established primarily and principally against the resisting Germans, testifies to the strength and the courage of the German opposition. It is only now, however, that we are beginning to learn the full story of the German opposition, from such witnesses as are

still living, like Dr. Pechel. To be sure, the evidence has to be carefully sifted, and we must be on our guard against another one of the "resistance myths" that have become part of European folklore today. Nor must we forget that the story of the German opposition reveals fully the most pitiable and criminal cowardice and moral rottenness of the majority of the leading generals; who are really responsible for the fact that so much of the heroism of civilians has come to nothing and whose blown-up prestige ought to be pricked forever. And yet what remains is impressive enough and ought to dispose of the curious but widespread notion that, notwithstanding the Gestapo, the concentration camps, and the special courts to keep them down, the Germans did not offer any serious resistance to the regime. The evidence is all the more impressive if one considers that the German opposition had to act against the powerful sentiment of common patriotism instead of making full use of it like the resistance movements in the other European countries.

During all those terrible years when, here in Switzerland, we were living in constant imminent danger of sharing the fate of all the other victims of the Gestapo, we were asking ourselves in exasperation again and again if there were in that modern Sodom at least the equivalent of the ten righteous for whom God was willing to spare the Biblical town (Genesis 18:32). Now we know that there was in Nazi Germany that minimum number of righteous men. If it was God Himself who was willing to spare Sodom for those righteous, how much less are we weak men entitled to be revengeful and to turn Germany into one large penal colony or super-Buchenwald? For who are *we* to pass the death sentence on a whole nation? What are *our* credentials?

In fact, if the world is reluctant to revise the notion of an indiscriminately responsible German nation, it is even less willing in general to recognize that it has itself a heavy responsibility to bear for the advent and the development of the Third Reich and that many people outside of Germany are even much more responsible than a large part of the Germans themselves. If this connivance of the world in the face of the Third Reich should

be excused as respectable pacifism, we must reply that pacifism with regard to international war is on the same footing with pacifism with regard to civil war. What was criminal weakness on the part of German generals who did not dare to challenge the Nazis in time can hardly be called something else in the case of Chamberlain or Daladier. In both cases it was a question of defending our common civilization, and the German anti-Nazis felt just as much betrayed by Chamberlain as by General von Brauchitsch. Their enemies were those foreign professors who were eager to glorify the Nazi regime just as much as Professor Carl Schmitt or other scientific blackguards in Germany. We imagine that Russian anticommunists will feel much the same way about Mr. Davies and other fellow-travelers today as the German anti-Nazis felt about the foreign diplomats who honored the Nuremberg party days with their presence, and foreign correspondents and writers who told the world about the glorious achievements of the Third Reich.

There is no denying the fact that the Germans as such bear a legal responsibility for the damage done by the government that acted in their name, a responsibility like that of the railroad company for an accident caused by one of its engineers who has gone mad. We might equally speak of a collective responsibility of the Germans in the sense of a historical responsibility for the faulty development of the German Reich since the time of Bismarck, and we have every reason to wish that the Germans felt this responsibility as intensely as possible.

It is quite a different thing, however, to establish a collective responsibility of all Germans in the sense of a real partnership in a punishable crime for which we assume them to be guilty because they happen to have this passport and this domicile. Let us stress most emphatically that this is simply a barbaric notion that would lead us back to the darkest periods of mankind when group responsibility still took the place of personal responsibility. As Christians we ought to know that it is nonsense to speak of "collective guilt," because guilt is always personal. We ought to recognize, moreover, that the notion of a "collective guilt" of all Germans is simply the reversal of the Nazi



concept of the "master race." As Stephen Spender well said in a recent article, "Germany in Europe" (*The Fortnightly*, June 1946): "One of the greatest successes of German nationalists is to make Germans to think of themselves in absolute terms. The Nazis claimed to be the *Herrenvolk*, and Hitler spoke of his regime lasting for '1000 years.' The enemies of Germany accept this view of Germans. They isolate aspects of German behavior and treat them as absolutely true of all Germans. They regard all German young people as incurably tainted with Nazism. They try to invent solutions for the German problem which contemplate Germany as perpetually a desert, a hospital and a prison."

Many people do not seem to realize that by accepting this notion of "collective guilt" of the Germans—and to a lesser degree of the Italians—they are betraying one of the most important principles of our civilization, i.e. personal responsibility, in favor of collectivist notions that do away with our individuality. That they do not even realize it any longer is the most disquieting aspect. We are, indeed, merrily traveling along the road that leads to a state of things where the passport becomes not only positively a diploma of nobility or an insurance policy, but also negatively a decree of expropriation (as in the case of the German assets even in neutral countries), a deportation order, a charter of infamy, a warrant of arrest, and finally a death sentence. It is natural that the collectivists of all shades are quite happy about this development. But what we are to think of the others?

These, however, are quite clearly the last consequences of the doctrine of the absolute and indiscriminate collective guilt of the Germans. It is this notion that has to bear most of the responsibility for the fatal mistakes that so far have been made in the treatment of Germany. Without it, the insane Potsdam program of destruction would be hardly thinkable. It has been used and it is still being used as an excuse for measures that otherwise would be absolutely indefensible, and as a refuge for a bad conscience. Finally, it is the flat denial of all the assurances that have been made by the Allied war propaganda that a differ-

ence would be made between the regime and the people. Should this notion of the "collective guilt" prevail in the treatment of the conquered nations, then it would be very difficult in the future to mobilize against a totalitarian government the opposing part of the population. There is all the more reason today for the representatives of totalitarianism to rejoice over the triumph of this collectivist theory of "collective guilt."

It is quite a pertinent question to ask what would have become of the peace in the nineteenth century if the Congress of Vienna had dealt with the French after the formula of the "collective guilt" of the French nation. It is certainly a question that invites comparisons very discreditable to our own enlightened time. It seems that the peacemakers after the Napoleonic Wars knew better what a totalitarian government really means. The pressure that such a regime exerts on the people by terror and propaganda is so enormous that it is impossible to identify the responsibility of the government with that of the people, in contrast to a democratic regime with a free public opinion where such a responsibility of the nation for the cruelties of its government cannot be disputed. It seems paradoxical that, on the one hand, it is a totalitarian regime that brings the utmost misery over the world, and that, on the other hand, it is exactly this most exasperating case where the nation as such is less responsible than under a democratic regime—in other words, that the same kind of government that makes a country capable of the worst diminishes at the same time the responsibility of the people as such for the crimes that have been perpetrated in its name. But, of course, the paradox is only apparent, for it is just the totalitarian tyranny that makes it possible that a government may commit those crimes without being hindered by democratic institutions and public opinion. It appears highly unsatisfactory that we cannot make a whole nation responsible just when the worst crimes are being committed in its name. But the real reason is, of course, that it is totalitarianism that is so highly unsatisfactory. It must be crushed before it is too late. But in crushing National Socialism in time the outside world failed no less than the Germans themselves.



## PART II

# THE HISTORIC ROOTS

If no soul perishes, how could those great souls, the nations, with their bright genius and their history rich in martyrs, full of heroic sacrifices, overflowing with immortality—how could these be extinguished? When one of them is in eclipse for one moment, the whole world suffers in every nation.

MICHELET, *Le Peuple*, PART 3, CH. 4



## ON THE GERMAN NATIONAL CHARACTER

THE symbol of justice is the balance. If we want to arrive at a just judgment concerning the German nation in its terrible downfall of our day, we must continually weigh against one another accusation and exculpation. In this lies both the difficulty and the danger of our task. We must be just on one side to the weighty evidence of those who place all their emphasis on the case against Germany, and on the other hand we must not shut our ears to the voice of reason and conscience, which urgently reminds us that an unqualified condemnation of the whole German people would be a grave miscarriage of historic justice. It might be all the more fatal since it would exclude any reasonable treatment of the German problem and frustrate any hope of its ultimate solution. If we incline too much to one side or the other, to prosecution or defense, every time we do so we shall run into grave danger. If we identify ourselves without any reservation with the condemnation that the world is for very intelligible reasons inclined today to pronounce, we shall be failing in the task it is our duty to perform. No less great, however, is the danger if in opposing this condemnation we overstep certain limits. It is the danger that we might strengthen the Germans in a tendency against which they have most carefully to guard, if their present disaster is not to lose for them its profoundest lesson—that of the need for thoroughgoing moral purification.

In this situation we must always bear in mind that we have to speak in entirely different ways to the Germans and to the rest of the world. We have to warn the world not to allow

itself to be carried away in its understandable wrath to decisions and actions that would overshoot the mark and do harm that would be difficult to repair. To the Germans we say: Take care not to take too lightly your heavy responsibility, and do not imagine that it is enough to set down the Nazis as a criminal gang with which you have nothing to do. If the Germans were to fall back on the comfortable theory that the Third Reich was no more than an unfortunate incident in their history, involving, apart from its agents, no guilt or responsibility of the German nation itself, they would not only be lulling themselves with a legend comparable to the famous legend of the "stab in the back," but would also be doing themselves the worst of wrongs. They would be barring their own way to the moral and political revolution that will alone be able to free the German nation from a grave and obstinate disease and to give added historic meaning even to the catastrophe of today.

It is to be feared that the Germans may in any case be tempted glibly to evade responsibility for Nazism by means of a "mischance legend" of this sort. So much the more irresponsible would it be if we were to offer the slightest encouragement to this idea. It cannot be helped that some of the things we have to say to the outer world might be misused by the Germans to lull their conscience. If we wish to avoid complicity in this misuse, we must emphatically warn the Germans against it.

We must do still more. We must leave not a shadow of doubt that Nazism, far from being a mere incident in German history, arose from conditions peculiar to Germany alone. It could never have come if the matters of pure chance whose existence we have no intention of denying had not found an environment that is the product of Germany's whole history. There are Hitlers everywhere, and have been at all times, but it is Germany's shame that so miserable a figure could become her leader. In order to germinate, the seed of Nazism had to find a favorable soil. It found it in the German Reich and the Germans, such as they had become in their political, spiritual,

economic, and social history. The very Germans who are so ready to deny at once any connection between Nazism and the specifically German environment, and who to that end rely on the fact that, of course, other nations too are burdened with responsibility for wrongdoing, thereby demonstrate how easily, with that mentality, they were able to fall victim, at least for a time, to the Nazi poison.

We must therefore insist with the utmost emphasis that the Third Reich is deeply rooted in German history, and that it is, indeed, the disastrous conclusion of the fateful development that began with Bismarck's brutal "unification" of Germany. But the very fact that this final outcome has been so apocalyptic gives us hope that the Germans themselves may struggle through to the recognition that now—after the first partial payment in 1914-19—they must pay the full price for the wrong path they have pursued since 1866. With this hope is bound up the further hope that they may now be ready for a radical change of course that will solve the German problem. This brings us to the supremely important conclusion that, true as it is that Nazism grew out of conditions peculiar to Germany, it is entirely possible to make a radical change in these conditions. We are bound to say to many Germans that their case is far graver than they imagine; but we are entitled to assure many non-Germans that the case is much more hopeful than they think. The extent of the hope depends, however, entirely on the degree to which the Germans appreciate the gravity of their case, and this is also the only hope remaining to the Germans. The time has now come for them to open their eyes and realize the course their history has taken, and also to look deep into their own souls and conscientiously to consider what they find there.

We may put it another way: The right method of serious attack on the German problem may be compared to that of the psychiatrist in approaching a clinical case. Without any preconceived notion, in the simple search for the truth, he will seek to explore the soul of the patient and its development, in order in this way to arrive at an accurate diagnosis and to



apply a suitable treatment. The solution of the German problem calls, in fact, for psychotherapeutical treatment on the vastest scale the world has ever known. In this spirit we shall now devote ourselves to the study of the German mind.

#### DIFFICULTIES

We should not be following the example of the conscientious physician if we allowed ourselves to be carried away by the anger of the moment, and oversimplified our task by just setting Nazism down as the outcome of an incorrigible German national character. Even if we were to declare all living Germans to be open or camouflaged Nazis—which we have no right whatever to do—it would be monstrous to include in this judgment all the Germans of the past and to say, "Such are the Germans today, and such they have ever been." There is a certain type of contemporary German who has become so hateful as to tempt us to include the Germans of all ages in our condemnation. The crimes of this modern German, whom we all know and loathe, are, however, too many already for us to allow him to play a further trick on us by making the Germany of the past hateful to us, by besmirching the whole history of that great and gifted nation at the heart of Europe and reducing everything connected with it to the unspeakable level of a Hitler or a Himmler. There is further a serious danger that the very ease with which the idea of the "eternal evil genius of Germany" can be shown to be false may obscure the real problem, that of the origin of the Prussianized type of modern German, who so easily "fell for" Nazism.

Thus we cannot under any conditions accept the vulgar theory of the "eternal German of the Gestapo." Any attempt to compile an impressive list of all the ill deeds of German history, from the ancient Teutons down to Himmler and his minions, and of every condemnation of the Germans that has ever been pronounced, and to offer this list as evidence that Nazism revealed the German in his true and eternal form, is certainly unworthy of any serious sociologist or historian. Every educated person knows how easy it is to draw a caricature of

this sort of any nation, simply by industriously making an appropriate selection of the facts of history. It would do nobody any good if the Germans tried to return the compliment.

All the more seriously must we treat the question whether and how far the national character of the Germans reveals traits that facilitated the triumph of Nazism over them. If the German seriously examines himself he will certainly be unable roundly to deny the existence of such traits. He will have to admit that without certain elements in the German character it would have been impossible for Nazism even to develop, much less gain and maintain supreme power.

It is true that we must bear in mind the great difficulties that call for solution in this connection, difficulties implicit in any attempt at scientific treatment of so vague a concept as that of national character.<sup>1</sup> These difficulties are particularly formidable in the case of Germany because the German character lacks the sharp outlines and the distinct form we recognize in the French or British character. In addition to this, we have continually to bear in mind Germany's peculiar character as a "nation of nations," the differences of racial character being so many that we find difficulty in recognizing any national character common to all the German territories. What has the Austrian, thoroughly German though he is, in common with the modern *Reichsdeutsche*, the German of the modern Reich; what has the Bavarian, the Aleman of Württemberg or of Baden, or the Rhinelander, or the man of Lower Saxony, in common with the Prussian?

The truth is that the German has the greatest trouble in understanding himself—how can others be expected to understand him? The question "What is Germany?" has never ceased to occupy the German just as much as the other question "What is the German's fatherland?" and the two questions are both characteristic of the German's "national character."

<sup>1</sup> The problems of the concept of national character are discussed by Sir Ernest Barker in his book *National Character and the Factors in Its Formation*, 3rd ed., London, 1939; Friedrich Hertz, "Die allgemeinen Theorien vom Nationalcharakter," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, 1925, Vol. 54; A. Fouillée, *Esquisse psychologique des peuples européens*, Paris, 1903.

Let us admit that the concept of "national character" is so problematic that it might almost have been created as an arena for the dilettanti and the chauvinists, and every honest man will make use of it only with the utmost reluctance. We shall find nothing to quarrel with in Schopenhauer's dictum in his *Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit*:

Individuality far outweighs nationality, and in any given man the former demands consideration a thousand times more than the latter. Of the national character, which has reference to the crowd, there will never be much good that can honestly be said. On the contrary, it is merely human narrowness, perversity, and baseness, making their appearance in every country in a different form, and this is called the national character. If *one* of these characteristics disgusts us we praise another, until that one disgusts us in turn. Every nation laughs at other nations, and all of them are right.

Thus in the so-called national character we shall never be able to see more than a rough average or a collective component of the individual characters of all the members of a nation; and we must not be surprised if we find little or nothing of this conception of national character present in any individual case. In the very case of the German nation, many of its greatest men seem by no means to fit the general picture formed usually of the typical German. What was there German about Leibniz, about Goethe?

And yet we know that the national character is a reality, even in the case of the German national character, which is so exceedingly difficult to define. How else could we explain the spirit of the language of a nation, common to all its nationals? It may be that G. K. Chesterton gets nearest the truth in saying that "a national soul is as indefinable as a smell, and as unmistakable."<sup>2</sup> But there is another difficulty here. We must distinguish between the character of a nation at a particular time and its apparent permanent character through the ages. The two would be identical if we had any guarantee that the national character is invariable in its essentials. But this certainly is not

<sup>2</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *The Victorian Age in Literature*, p. 13.

the case. While some traits seem to remain unchanged in the course of history, and are true constants, others may undergo fundamental changes, whether under the influence of a great historic experience or through a change in religious and intellectual conditions, or through the example of some eminent personality. Very few people keep in mind the fact that it is a great mistake to treat the national character of the European nations as a historical constant and to overlook, for example, the great change that seems to have come over the English or the French character during the nineteenth century. But in no case, probably, is this mistake so great as in that of the German nation, which, precisely in the second half of the nineteenth century, suffered under the calamitous guidance of Bismarck, under the pressure of an unexampled increase in population, and under the influence of a real revolution in its economic and social structure an especially abrupt change in its outlook and its conditions of existence. We are convinced, indeed, that what the world understands and disapproves in general as the German national character is in the main simply a product of this very latest phase of German history.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, everyone should delve into the literature of the first half of the nineteenth century, allow himself to be influenced by the judgments expressed, not only by Germans but by foreigners, and compare the picture so gained with the type of German we find at the end of that century. Then it will be impossible to fail to note a really profound change in the German soul, or to fail to understand such a sober observer as

<sup>3</sup> Among the extensive literature on the subject of the German national character, mention may be made of the following works: Reinhard Buchwald, *Die Wissenschaft vom deutschen Nationalcharakter*, Jena, 1917; Bogumil Goltz, *Die Deutschen, eine ethnographische Studie*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1860; Richard Müller-Freienfels, *Psychologie des deutschen Menschen und seiner Kultur*, 2nd ed., Munich, 1930; E. Kahler, *Der deutsche Charakter in der Geschichte Europas*, Zurich, 1937; L. Reynaud, *L'âme allemande*, Paris, 1933; J. Rivière, *L'Allemand*, Paris, 1918; F. von Hügel, *The German Soul*, London, 1916; Balbino Giuliano, *Latinità e Germanesimo*, Bologna, 1940; Eugen Diesel, *Die deutsche Wandlung, das Bild eines Volkes*, Stuttgart, 1929; Friedrich Hertz, *Nationalgeist und Politik*, Vol. 1, Zurich, 1937; Max Scheler, *Die Ursachen des Deutschenbasses*, Leipzig, 1917; Gooch, Ginsberg, Butler, and others, *The German Mind and Outlook*, London, 1946.

Ranke when in 1832 he bore witness that the German nation was "a thoughtful, well-disposed race, with moderate needs and aspirations, attached to lawful and quiet progress, loyal to its constitution, devoted to peaceful occupations, and fearing God from the bottom of its heart."<sup>4</sup> Let anyone read the *Jugenderinnerungen eines alten Mannes*, by the painter Gerhard von Kügelgen (1772-1820), and ask himself how it is that in that book one finds so likable, so introspective and spiritual a type of German, so markedly differing from the later type. Let him allow to sink into his mind the picture of the German people drawn about the middle of the nineteenth century by the historian W. H. Riehl (and drawn without leaving out the darker side), and compare it with the protestations of love for the Germans made, certainly not in complete blindness, by the great Frenchmen of that period, Victor Hugo, Michelet, E. Quinet, and others.

Or are we to suppose that Michelet was drawing upon his imagination when in the introduction to his *Histoire universelle* he praised "*le calme, la pureté, le chaste recueillement de l'Allemagne*"? And even in 1860 the German writer Bogumil Goltz wrote of the German as the universal man and added, "If there is a world economy, a divine providence, a progress of the human race, a growing humanity, there will also be a German race to the end of the world." A few decades later, and no German writer who was to be taken seriously would have ventured to attribute such qualities to the Germans. Who would not feel sympathy with the Germany of Ludwig Richter, of Moritz von Schwind, of Kügelgen, of Schubert, Schumann, Jean Paul, Stifter, Mörike, Wilhelm Raabe, and the brothers Grimm? Need we mention what eminent Swiss writers of that period—Gottfried Keller, Jakob Burckhardt, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer—thought of that earlier Germany?

Quite obviously we have here a breach in Germany's development. It is so striking that we have the impression that since Bismarck the German has lost his own soul. What has happened to him since will occupy us fully later on. In what

<sup>4</sup> L. von Ranke, *Sämliche Werke*, Vol. 49-50, p. 170.

follows here we limit ourselves to speaking with all caution of the constants of the German national character that, in spite of this latest change, may fairly be determined.

#### THE "ETERNAL GERMAN"

There is a really appalling habit of talking of this "eternal German," whether in praise or blame. To the author of the *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*—Alfred Rosenberg, a German Russian, as Hitler was an Austrian, Hess an Egyptian, Darré an Argentinian—"a Nordic heroic saga, a Prussian march, a composition of Bach, a sermon of Ekkehart, a Faust monologue" seemed merely "different expressions of one and the same soul." That view is as intolerable as the opposite one of those who see in the Germans only the same savage barbarians rampaging through the centuries. It is all too easy to treat the immensely difficult subject in more or less witty aphorisms, to set out isolated testimonies from widely separated centuries, and then to say: "There you have the German, arrogant, brutal, and at the same time sentimental and lachrymose, as he was even at that time."

It is very effective today to recall that as long ago as the beginning of the twelfth century a German mission seems to have behaved before the Pope at Châlons-sur-Marne in the same savage and menacing way as a Nazi trade delegation,<sup>5</sup> or that in a Dutch poem of the sixteenth century the German is described as humble in misfortune but arrogant and overbearing when things are going well.<sup>6</sup> In this connection it is usual to mention the sack of Rome in 1527 by Frundsberg's German-Spanish *Soldateska*, who had got out of control, as evidence of the

<sup>5</sup> "*Magis ad terrendum quam ad ratiocinandum missi...cerviciosi...teutonico impetu frendentes*," quoted in W. Kaegi, *Historische Meditationen*, Zurich, 1942, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Zoolang die mof is arm en kaal  
Zoo spreekt bij een bescheiden taal.  
Maar als hij komt tot grooten staat  
Dan doet hij God en menschen kwaad*

—poem by the Dutch poet Jakob Cats (1577-1660). "Mof" is a Dutch nickname for the Germans. It may be added that the Germans who at that time were troubling the Dutch were probably Austrians in the service of the Hapsburgs.

eternal barbarousness of the German—and to forget that undisciplined mercenaries who for months had received no pay might be expected to behave in this way anywhere, that the Spanish troops merrily took part in the sack of Rome, and that the looting of Constantinople by the European knights in the fourth crusade (1204) was, if possible, still more barbarous. Is it really necessary to remind such critics that the French Armagnacs or the Swedish soldiers of the Thirty Years' War were a frightful pestilence, the latter so much so that "Swedes" is a byword to this day in German popular speech? Is it still necessary just to pronounce the word "Ireland"?

If we want to avoid these dangerous paths and to keep to what is more or less demonstrable, the safest course is to proceed from the *spirit of the German language* as evidence that is constant and is accessible to scientific analysis.<sup>7</sup> If we are to be polite we may talk of it, with Vinet, as a predominantly philosophic and lyrical language, in contrast with such mainly

<sup>7</sup> "It is wonderful to see how a people has deposited the imprint of its character in the smallest details of its language; and when we reflect that the most delicate elements of the language date from an epoch of semibarbarism, and remark further how few things, of how little value, a civilized epoch can add of this type to the work of those dark ages, we are led to questions the answer to which is not entirely to the advantage of the doctrine of perfectibility." A. Vinet, *Chrestomathie française*, Vol. 2, Lausanne, 1860, p. ix. Unfortunately, there is a very amateurish method of using the German language for analyzing the German national character, a method against which one cannot issue too emphatic a warning. A dreadful example of it is the deduction that the German-speaking peoples—including, therefore, the Austrians and the German Swiss—must always have had a spiteful character, since they possess the word *Schadenfreude*, meaning pleasure in another's discomfiture. It is surely ridiculous to deny the universal human character of the satisfaction over somebody getting "what he deserves," and to try to build up a whole philosophy on the neat translation of a passage in Seneca's *De Beneficiis* that occurred to a German philologist (Ostermann, in 1591). It would be just as reasonable to say that only the Greeks, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Germans are familiar with homesickness, because only they have a word of their own for that feeling—or, indeed, only the Greeks, since, of course, the Anglo-Saxon and German words are a translation from the Greek. And does not the English language actually possess a native word of its own for *Schadenfreude* in "gloating"? And could not the German-speaking peoples reply further that both English and French lack a true equivalent for the kindly German word *gönnen*? It will be seen that such amateurish theories lead along very dangerous byways, and we are sorry to see a man like Mr. Harold Nicolson pursuing these paths in the *Spectator* of June 30, 1944. The morbid mentality of the Nazis should not be looked for in the language of Goethe.

logical languages as French. To put it more plainly and in more general terms, the German language reflects the unrestrained, anarchical, soft, indefinite, romantic and nonclassic, sentimental, brooding, and imprecise elements in the German—characteristics that have marked the man as unmistakably as his language.

The German language confirms the element of the florid, the Gothic, the baroque that has struck every acute observer in the German nature, and which the German himself must admit to be characteristic of him. There is also the brooding, dreamy, introspective element, the habit of gazing into the unfathomable, that makes Dürer's etching "Melancholia" one of the most German of all works of art. There is the irrational element that, as we shall see later, continually reveals itself in the history of the German soul and is in such strong contrast to the Latin formality and clarity. In his language the German seems to be untiringly occupied in pushing forward into the uttermost regions of the expressible, and when he has got as far as that he plunges into the sphere of that which can no longer be made adequately comprehensible by words, a sphere in which he occupies a unique position in the world—the sphere of lyricism, of metaphysics, and, as the ultimate stage, of music. Here there lie open for him supreme opportunities, but at the same time the gravest dangers. We may add that the formlessness of the German language permits a juxtaposition of zenith and nadir in style and expression in a way scarcely any other language does.<sup>8</sup>

It is astonishing how many important conclusions may be drawn from this elementary German constant. It is only a step, for instance, from formlessness and lack of co-ordination to

<sup>8</sup> Ludwig Börne, Heine's contemporary, wrote in his *Schilderungen aus Paris* (1822) the following far-fetched comment: "The French vocabulary consists entirely of silver coin; it has no copper like German, and a bad French writer never writes so badly as a bad German writer. On the other hand, French lacks the gold of the German language." Elsewhere (in *Bemerkungen über Sprache und Stil*) he says: "The French cannot have any style, because their language has one." Accordingly, the unspeakable style in which Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is written could never be adequately translated into French or English, a fact that unfortunately assisted the Nazis' first efforts to seem abroad to be almost civilized. Cf. also Wilhelm Röpke, "Die Kunst des Uebersetzens," *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, February 1945.



immoderation, which has without question been characteristic of the German in all ages. He must know that he has the dangerous tendency to proceed to extremes in his thinking and acting, without law or limitation, and only too often he comes to grief in the process. He seems to possess as a hereditary defect an almost uncontrollable urge to the fantastic in politics (which he then, in involuntary humor, calls Realpolitik), in science, art, music, and in every other field. This characteristic may make its appearance in his familiar "thoroughness," in restless industry, in towering systems of metaphysics, or in massive fugues and symphonies, but it may just as well appear also in wild frenzy, in the cult of the colossal, in intellectual extremism and radicalism. The German is always in danger of going too far, and of pursuing any thought or enterprise, whether good or, unfortunately, bad, to the uttermost conceivable conclusion. Germany is the country that has produced, in Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1844), the most radical and so the most ridiculous book in the world's literature; the country that kept up to the last gasp two world wars against the combined strength of almost all other nations, that carried an inflationary process down to the complete annihilation of the currency, and finally, when it made an experiment with totalitarianism, did not rest until this had become the most total and the most repulsive tyranny of all ages.

Providence has endowed the Germans with many great gifts. If it had provided them as amply with the quality of moderation, how great a blessing to mankind, instead of a curse, their country might have become! Since, however, German history is not by any means an unbroken chain of immoderacies, but has proved again and again that the German is quite able to master his dangerous tendency, and since the recognition of one's own defects is itself the principal step toward their overcoming, we should ourselves be falling into an immoderacy of pessimism if we were not ready today to believe even here in the possibility of a profound change. The moment at which the Germans have plunged themselves by the greatest of their

immoderacies into the profoundest disaster of their history should indeed give us good ground for hope.

We have mentioned the brooding element in the nature of the Germans, and from here we come to the seriousness and the *moodiness of the German*, which may grow into melancholy or evaporate into pessimistic humor. This is another cause of the German's "thoroughness," the German's pedantry, but also of the German's objectivity, the German's energy and devotion to his task. The German depreciation of form in favor of the naked reality of any matter has also one of its roots here. Thus the German frequently lacks the element of simplicity, which he finds so attractive in the Italian, whereas he himself has to reflect upon everything, to work up everything into a theory. He likes constructing theories and systems, and he is half won to any cause if it is placed before him with all the weightiness of a metaphysic or a *Weltanschauung*. Karl Marx was just as German as the mass of his followers, who swore by his fat books, and the same way to the heart of the German, through a *Weltanschauung*, was taken later by the Nazis with fateful success.

Hence the lecturing, pedagogical style of the German, and hence his habit, so amusing to other nations, of considering everything in advance down to the smallest detail, so that, for instance, he will not buy a car until he has studied a textbook of motoring. Hence the type of German who, finding two doors, one marked "Entrance to Paradise" and the other "Entrance to Lecture on Paradise," makes for the latter. This is the soil on which, especially in Germany, the modern type of the *conscientiously laborious man* could thrive, after Protestantism had given the final and decisive impulse to that end. "I have simply to pay for being a German; it is characteristic of the Germans that they become so heavy about everything, that everything weighs so heavily upon them."<sup>9</sup> So Goethe made one of his women characters speak, and every German knows how right he was. It is a moodiness, a touch of melancholy, that one finds

<sup>9</sup> "—dass sie über alles schwer werden, dass alles über ihnen schwer wird." Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Bk. IV, Ch. 20.

even in a Viennese waltz with its "sunny pessimism," while at the other end of the scale we find it in the form of peevishness, of simple ill humor, and of an absurd solemnity over trifles (over the affairs, say, of a rabbit fanciers' club)—all traits that mark the German.

This seriousness makes the German take not only life as a whole but every task, however trifling, in dead earnest. If he starts anything he is determined to go methodically about it. Thus German philology with its meticulousness, and German history with its painstaking immersion in detail, have become proverbial, like the *Reichskursbuch*, the German timetable, whose ambition it was to give faultlessly every railway connection in every part of the world. If the German writes a scientific book, he attaches the utmost importance to making his quotations with absolute exactitude, while with British and French authors (not so much so with Americans) it seems to be almost a point of honor to get foreign names and the titles of foreign books as wrong as possible. Similarly, the average German worker or craftsman is utterly unwilling to put in scamped workmanship unless absolutely driven to it by the pace at which he is made to work or the sweated rate paid.

The German will do nothing by halves, even if the task is repugnant. This means, among other things, that he is more ready than most people to submit to the *discipline* required of him by any hierarchy or organization. This is one of the reasons why the German is so particularly easy to govern, why he will readily and intelligently take his place in any organization, and why as a rule he is an equally good and conscientious civil servant or soldier. The other reason is to be sought in his mental attitude toward the issues of public life; to this we shall come later.<sup>10</sup> This may be a great virtue, but it may just as easily be

<sup>10</sup> A third cause of these soldierly qualities of the Germans is enlarged upon by K. Thieme (*op. cit.*, p. 93 ff.) in a justly severe criticism of the book *D'où vient l'Allemagne?* (Paris, 1939), by Gonzague de Reynolds, a book that is a model of how not to depict the "eternal German." Apart from this, the German's military qualities present a particularly complicated problem, which can be adequately considered only in connection with the political history of the immediate past. Only this history explains why the German has had occasion to demonstrate his readiness to "toe the line" in this particular field of military organization.

a grave danger, and how great the danger is was shown by the readiness with which the Germans submitted to Nazi directions. It would be a good thing if they could learn that there are cases in which it is simply a duty to be disobedient and undisciplined. *Stubborn obedience and discipline have brought the Germans infinitely more misfortune than other peoples have suffered from the opposites of those qualities; without them the Germans would neither have permitted two world wars and a gigantic inflation to be carried to their ruinous end, nor have permitted so monstrous a regime as the Third Reich to come into power and to hold power for so long.* It is part of the same story that, of all the forms of the proletarian movement, anarchism and syndicalism were never able to gain a footing in Germany, while it was from the moderate form of social democracy, a system in harmony with the German character, from the social democratic idea of the state with well-organized welfare and police systems, and from the rigid Social Democratic party organization that Nazism borrowed some essential characteristics.

When in his *Belagerung von Mainz*, 1793, Goethe admitted that he would "rather commit an injustice than put up with disorder," he certainly made his own a very German view, but it is one in which merits and faults are closely associated. In public, too, the German loves above all to have law and order in everything, and unhappily this order is only too often merely superficial, circumstances robbing it of its moral content—justice. Everything must *seine Richtigkeit haben*, must be "as it should," with publication in the *Reichsgesetzblatt* (Official Gazette) in proper official terms, with due police order and authorizations, one leading to another with no interruption in formal legal continuity; and if everything is thus made "legal," the German's mind is only too easily set at rest, even if this legalization is applied to such enormities as the mass murder that took place under Hitler's orders on June 30, 1934. The Nazis knew their Germans when they placed the utmost emphasis on the "legality" of the means by which they proposed to come into power. "All in the right and proper way," as an old peasant

said to my father when he told him how in his youth he had industriously poached.

This is why in Germany revolutions have been so much rarer than elsewhere, and have been so reluctantly started. Even the German revolution of 1525, in which the German peasants had every right to rid themselves by violence of a great mass of injustice and oppression, began with an attempt at amicable negotiations; and in 1848 it actually happened that the inhabitants of one of the petty German principalities humbly petitioned their prince (their *Landesvater*, "the father of their country") to grant them a revolution. During the revolutionary days of November 1918 a menacing crowd of workers had collected in front of Dresden Castle. One of the Kaiser's aides-de-camp came out and asked them what they wanted. When he learned that they were complaining that they had no work to do, he shouted innocently, "Why, you silly asses, you ought to be glad!" There were roars of laughter at what was taken as a good joke, and the crowd dispersed peacefully.

The British, too, have no love for revolutions, and they, too, place law and justice above all else; but it is a lawfulness that rests much more than in Germany on the identification of free citizens, as a matter of course, with the life of the community, whose officials are not accorded any special standing; it is not based on any sense of a duty of subordination to authorities, respect for whose majesty has become a habit. Sir Ernest Barker has pointed out that "in England we tend to make the State itself a sort of club, and to extend the methods of the club into the management of the State. In Germany, it may be said, there is a tendency to make even a club into a sort of State, and to extend the methods of the State into the management of clubs."<sup>11</sup> Anyone will understand this who has ever belonged to a German students' association, one of the most ridiculous of German institutions.

We must bear in mind that we are still concerned with identifying that part of the national character of the Germans today which seems to have also marked the Germans of past

<sup>11</sup> *Reflections on Government*, London, 1942, p. 290.

centuries—in other words, to determine the constants in the nature of the German. In so doing we must be alive to the great difficulty of distinguishing the constant traits from those that may have made their appearance only in recent generations. Very often it is precisely these latter that the German ought to learn to see with the critical eye of the foreigner, in order to find the way back to his better self of the past, now that disaster has made plain to him the path along which he has allowed himself to be driven. In this connection we must realize that many characteristics that do no honor to the German of today are degenerate or exaggerated forms of qualities that may originally have actually been virtues. It is impossible, however, to indicate here the exact point at which a virtue turns into a vice.

With this repeated warning to be cautious, we will try once more to probe the indefinite, vague, and plastic element in the nature of the German. We find to begin with that a mind of this sort, with no fixed form or limitation, possesses and tries to combine a great wealth of potentialities. This brings us up against the well-known German characteristic of bringing everything possible under consideration and trying to comprise even opposites in a more or less forced synthesis. Hence *his inner disharmony, his often disquieting attitude toward the truth, his ability to entertain simultaneously in his mind the most heterogeneous and incompatible ideas and judgments, even if he is unable to reconcile them all with one another*, and the unrest that comes from harboring so many souls in his breast.<sup>12</sup> Finally, he tries to rescue himself by making out of the illogical a higher logic and then talking of “dialectics,” “dynamics,” “development,” “becoming,” and other such things. Consequently, the German finds himself scarcely anywhere so entirely in his element as in the philosophy of history, in which, under the heading “destiny” or “development,” he sets up a special account for all that is dubious. *Since, however, such a person finds no rest in*

<sup>12</sup> In this verdict the German Müller-Freienfels (*op. cit.*, p. 173), the Frenchman J. Rivière (*op. cit.*, p. 159 ff.), and the Englishman F. von Hügel (*op. cit.*, p. 188 ff.) entirely agree. Rivière's mordant acidity perhaps penetrates deepest when he uses the example of the philosopher Paul Natorp to show that “the German has a natural gift for effecting the synthesis of the disparate” (p. 194).

*his mind, since everything there is simmering, he will concentrate with all the more resolution in deciding and acting.* Thus Faust alters, in Goethe's tragedy, the opening of the Gospel according to St. John from "In the beginning was the Word" to "In the beginning was the Deed," and Goethe in his wisdom makes this the starting point of the tragedy. Does this not provide the ultimate explanation of the paradoxical element in the German that makes him seem so unintelligible and so sinister to the foreigner? And should not the German realize that the time has come for him to set himself a law and a measure and a limit and to direct his mind to firmly established and evident points?

We have been speaking of the indefinite and inconstant element in the German mind. We may also speak of the German's *teeming emotional life*, and thus push open another door to understanding, which in turn leads to many side doors. Instead of spending many words on this with German emotional extravagance, we will simply mention the fact that for the German, *Weihnachten* (Christmas) is a word whose whole magic is almost beyond the understanding of a non-German, and that the special symbol of this festival, the Christmas tree, has made its way throughout the world from German lands. All Germans are as one in their warm feeling for the inner radiance of this festival, however differently they may think about everything else, and when in the winter of 1918-19 battles were raging in Berlin between the Spartacists and the government troops, on Christmas Eve the fighters went peacefully to their homes in tacit agreement that at the moment the feast of Christmas was the thing that mattered.

It will rightly be remarked that this sudden softness alongside so much that is hard and indeed brutal deserves the depreciatory epithet "sentimental" and throws into strong relief the inexplicable discord in the German nature. But are we on this account to stigmatize the gentleness, the German *Lieder*, the fine German Christmas songs, or Stifter's "*Heilige Nacht*," and not, on the contrary, the hardness that has probably been superposed on it only in recent generations, and are we not to hope

that the German may return in this respect also to his better and, we think, his true self, instead of offering the world this repulsive spectacle of the brutal-lachrymose?

The Christmas tree comes from the forest, and here we have another word that offers a key to the German nature. We need only to pronounce it in order to indicate the German's quite specially intimate and, if you will, primitive *feeling for nature*, a feeling that harmonizes with the twilight of the highland forest. Is it not remarkable that Germany should be not only one of the most thickly populated and most highly industrialized but also one of the most extensively forested countries? That here until lately—until the Nazi architects of ruin in their obsession with war penetrated to the uttermost corner with their motorways, their airdromes, and their concealed war factories—there was a solitude remote from the world, in primeval forests in which the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), the blue roller (*Coracias garrulus*), the crane, and the eagle owl (*Strix bubo*) were to be found? That until a few decades ago there lived in the woods of the Weser highlands a real hermit who looked as if he had come out of Weber's *Freischütz* or one of Moritz von Schwind's cartoons, and that as recently as 1917 there came to the recruiting office at Celle a young peasant from a far corner of the Lüneburg Heath who said he had heard that there was a war going on and that he had got to report? Where else was there an industrial country in which it was possible to make grander trips far from the main roads?

All this presupposes a people with a specially intimate relationship with nature and a great respect for her. We can detect that relationship and respect in German lyrical poetry, in the place of the forest in German fiction and in the German opera, in the reluctance of the German to cut down an old tree, and in the high standing of forestry in Germany. It is significant that it was a German émigré of 1848, Carl Schurz, who, as Secretary of the Interior, took the first steps for the preservation of the American forests, and so acquired the nickname of "American Head Forester." It is also relevant in this connection that the Germans (including here, as in so many other respects, the



German-Swiss) have given the hunt a quite special character, which they express by the untranslatable word *Weidwerk*, a character in which the passion for the chase as a sport is united with knightliness and the enjoyment of nature. Those who have never lain in wait for the roebuck at dawn on a June day in a hunting stand in the forest, without in the slightest regretting missing the quarry, can hardly understand what is meant by that description of hunting.

Quite certainly, too, it was for this side of German life that Heine longed on his sickbed in Paris. He gave expression in his poems as hardly any other writer has done to that elementary German feeling for nature. But it was also that same author of the *Harzreise* who in his two works *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* and *Elementargeister*, both published in 1834 and both so well worth reading, showed more clearly and more impressively than any other German the dangers of such a feeling for nature.

Certainly we must be grateful to anyone who warns us that we cannot depart too far from nature without imperiling our spiritual health and our existence, and certainly there is a good deal that the world can learn in this respect from the Germans. But if, on the other hand, a man throws himself too impulsively on nature's breast, he forgets that civilization implies liberation from nature. He runs into the risk of falling victim to the state of mind that the eminent French philosopher Ernest Seillière (who will be of service to us later) describes as "*mysticisme naturiste*." One short step further, and he is in the realm of the primitive, the brutal, the uncivilized. *From forest to jungle is no great distance, while the symbol of civilization is not the block of tenements but the garden.* This, too, is a point at which the German is in the utmost danger from the possible exaggeration of a healthy and attractive characteristic, but here, too, the danger is at once diminished if he recognizes it and beware of it. May we not once more place hope in his knowledge of himself after the Nazis have availed themselves of this further German weakness to lead many Germans astray?

This emotional susceptibility of the German has one very evil

aspect. We have remarked on an earlier page that Dürer's "Melancholia" is one of the most German compositions, and it was so regarded by no less a judge than Jules Michelet. This figure of a woman gazing into the unfathomable would better symbolize "Germania" than the armed Brünhilde with her defiant glare, who was made, with characteristic lack of taste, to decorate the German postage stamps of the period of Wilhelm II. And yet that, too, is a symbol—of the need felt by a weak and emotional nature to seek support and compensation in a *forced hardness, stolidity, and coldness*, and to assume on every possible occasion a pugnacious, formidable, resolute "he-man" pose.

Probably this is one of the reasons why in the latter part of the nineteenth century the Germans felt so drawn to Prussianism that they largely fell victim to it. Everything became "iron"—iron resolution, iron crosses, and the Iron Chancellor, who created Greater Prussia. In the end "iron" no longer sufficed; people became "of steely hardness," the eyes of Wilhelm II and of Hitler "flashed like steel," the "steel helmet" became a political symbol. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Saxons, with the natural man's revulsion against bombast, spoke disrespectfully of "tin hats"; and finally we had the "Steel Axis" between Berlin and Rome. Now came the horrible type of person with "frozen features," represented in the pictures of German officers, government officials, and students in their corps, the person in whom everything is spasmodic and spurious, and who feels bound to maintain a permanent pose of defiant, daredevil heroism. And how repulsive the German tongue had become in the aggressive, guttural, strident tones of these persons, and how unmanly were persons like Hitler and his cronies with their hysterical shrieking! We know how the Nazis bred this intolerable type in masses, and it was only with deep disgust at such distortions of humanity that in recent years we could look at the faces that goggled at us with such brutal stupidity. We need only to look at German faces of the past to realize how far we have traveled from the days of Dürer or even Michelet. But why should we not be able to hope that what has come into existence in so short a time

may disappear just as quickly, if the Germans wake from their torpor and find their way back to their true selves? <sup>13</sup>

#### FINAL QUESTIONS

These are a few of the answers to the question of the German national character, which presents us with so many baffling enigmas. The writer is aware how incomplete and unsatisfying are the considerations he has advanced. As for the particularly important question of the *political* side of the German mentality, he must ask the reader to wait for later remarks, as this is a point that can be understood only on the basis of the political, social, economic, and intellectual history of the German people. For the rest we will confine ourselves to a few concluding remarks.

To begin with, we must frankly admit that we are far from fully comprehending all sides of the German character. Thus it is certainly of importance for the understanding of the German nature to know that, just as other peoples have their favorite illusions, among the Germans there is especially an obstinately held idea that they are innocent victims of circumstance or of other peoples. The German has a very dangerous inclination, continually standing in the way of self-examination, *to feel that he is being persecuted and to pity himself*, instead of asking how he is himself to blame and resolving to do better. For the German as well as for the foreigner it is exceedingly important to be perfectly clear about this pet notion of the Germans. But is it a constant or a characteristic only recently acquired? It is difficult to say. And how is this fixed idea to be explained? Perhaps we shall have later to offer a not unimportant contribution to the answering of this question. Or does there find expression in the inclination to self-pity the sense of belonging to a people

<sup>13</sup> R. Müller-Freienfels (*op. cit.*, p. 148) well remarks that the need for compensation has also shown itself in German science, in which a counterweight to the tendency to vague speculation was sought in precision, in detail work, and in method. Perhaps we have here one of the roots of the fear, so typical of German savants, of a "light" style. Mention may also be made here of the self-imposed constraint found, for instance, in the German students' unions, in strange contrast with the academic freedom so prized.

that seems singled out for the blows of fate, so that whenever it has tried like other peoples to achieve a strong centralized national state it has come to grief?

The inclination to self-pity is associated with another characteristic of the German: he is exceedingly sensitive, both as an individual and as a member of his nation. He seems to be only sparsely endowed with the precious gift of ironic introspection and of self-criticism, and he therefore lacks the fine type of humor that enables a man to laugh at himself. Any burlesque of his own history, such as the British enjoy, has so far been virtually an impossibility in Germany; on this subject the Germans are much less ready to be laughed at than the French, and when a German poet, Heinrich Heine, nevertheless dared to do it, they never forgave him.

An *oversensitiveness* of this sort reflects an unhealthy mental tension, a *continual occupation with oneself*—the German is continually asking, "What is German?"—and the uncertainty of a man who does not know what to think of himself, and who consequently is trying all the time to find confirmation of his true nature. The German lacks at bottom the minimum of self-confidence that makes a man natural, sure of himself, cheerful, and unembarrassed, and enables him to respect other men's self-confidence. That is why he is often so lamentably lacking in the tact that makes it unnecessary to have rules; he does not know how to maintain the happy mean between cringing and arrogance and is very liable to go from one extreme to the other. He is rather afraid of the wide world, and in face of it is likely to seem provincial. Consequently, he clings all the more to his own kind, to his professional colleagues, the fellow members of his association, to his *Stammtisch* (the café table reserved for his little group), to his compatriots. One must above all have observed the German colonies abroad to know how unpleasant this type easily becomes to other people. A narrow and obstinate nationalism will be abruptly exchanged for an undignified denial of one's own nature. This profound *unsureness* seems also to have characterized the Germans of past centuries. Lichtenberg asked long ago, in the eighteenth century, "Why is it that

non-Germans do not care to be taken for Germans? Why, if they want a disguise, do they usually claim to be French or English?" Nobody finds it so difficult to stand by his own nation as the German. In no other country have precisely the best people so candidly declared that they regard it as a real misfortune to belong to their own nation—once more with the characteristic exception of the Jews. Goethe, who called the Germans "estimable in the individual and wretched in the generality," Schopenhauer, Hölderlin (in *Hyperion*), and Nietzsche, all have said devastating things about their own people. Lichtenberg, in the eighteenth century, actually coined the phrase: "The character of the Germans in two words—*patriam fugimus*" ("we run away from our country").

No, as we have already said, the German is the very opposite of simple. He is like the dancer of whom Heinrich von Kleist writes in his immortal essay *Ueber das Marionetten-Theater*: "He grew all too self-conscious, and then he lost the natural grace of his physical and psychical movements. It would not be an injustice to the Germans to call them a *neurotic people*."

But what is the reason for that? I know of no short answer. A real explanation can be found only in the pathological elements of the collective existence the Germans have led for centuries, and quite especially in the last century. We shall come to this in the chapters that follow. But we may say at once that the deepest causes of this or that trait that seems to us to be "typically German" will probably always be beyond the reach of any serious scientific analysis.

Is not the ultimate truth perhaps that the national character of a people is like an immensely complicated chemical combination of various elements, elements that are to be found everywhere, while it is simply the way they have combined that is its special feature? This would mean that the German national character consists of many elements, not one of which is peculiar to this country, and only their specific combination produces the unique result. To this must be added the important fact that this chemical combination forming the national character continually changes in the course of history, often slowly and

unnoticeably, often suddenly and violently. Some of the elements of which it consists may be good, others bad, and yet others neutral, while the whole combination may be a highly dangerous explosive material.

But that would mean that the student of Germany has the difficult task of discovering the formula for the chemical combination of the German national character. If he finds it, it may be possible by means of a regrouping of the elements so to change the combination that the explosive may turn into a harmless and, indeed, useful material.

## THE PATHOLOGY OF GERMAN HISTORY

### FALLACIES AND HALF-TRUTHS

**T**HIS chemical combination with which we compared the German national character in the last chapter may broadly be regarded as the ultimate product of a thousand years of German history, a history that differs in important respects from that of the other great European nations. But what is the peculiarity of German history that has led to what we must once again call the German problem?

Those who know how difficult the problem is do not need to be told that there is no short answer to this question. In this case, if ever, it is true that every simple answer is wrong.

Some people say that the source of all the evil lies in the fact that Roman civilization, after many efforts to subject Germania to the empire, was forced in the end to stop short at the limes, the fortified frontier, and to abandon to barbarism the country east of the Rhine and the Neckar. The real culprit was thus Arminius, chief of the Cherusci, who annihilated the legions of Varus in the Teutoburger Wald in A.D. 9. This limes theory, as we may call it, sounds plausible and so has many adherents, even in Germany. But it is spoiled by the fact that there are other regions of Europe—Scotland, Scandinavia, Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and so on—that came even less under the influence of Roman civilization and yet have a full share in the patrimony of Europe. The argument that the Scandinavian peoples were seafarers, whose contacts with Western civilization were capable of bringing them under its influence without

Roman occupation, cannot save the theory, since Czechoslovakia, for instance, has no seacoast, and on the other hand there were large Germanic tribes dwelling by the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Equally unconvincing with the limes theory is the similar argument about the belated penetration of Christianity into certain German regions—into Mecklenburg, for instance, so late as the twelfth century. To this there is the obvious objection that Scandinavia was converted to Christianity little earlier, and Finland still later.

This does not mean that these explanations of the German problem are entirely worthless. The fact that wide regions of Germany were little influenced by Roman civilization and others renounced paganism only at a late date is actually of great importance. It supplies one reason for the strong regional differences in German culture, in particular for the striking contrast between the west and south, on the one hand, and the east on the other. It has also certainly reinforced other causes of the fatal elements in the German character. But by itself it is not a sufficient explanation.

This failure of any monistic explanation may be illustrated by another very widespread theory, which attributes the origin of the German problem to a later and a highly important event in German history, the Reformation, and to the influence of *Lutheran Protestantism*. That this theory, too, contains a great truth, we shall be concerned to show later. Without any question, Lutheranism influenced the political, spiritual, and social history of Germany in a way that, after careful consideration of everything, can be described only as fateful. Unquestionably a Catholic or even a Calvinist Germany would have pursued an entirely different course, on which we should have met neither such men as Friedrich II and Bismarck, nor such as Fichte, Hegel, Treitschke, and certainly no Hitler; and undoubtedly this course would have been followed by a people with less implicit faith in the state and with less political in-

<sup>1</sup> It should not be forgotten that, contrary to a widespread notion, the Germanic conquerors of the Roman Empire, Stilicho, Alaric, and Theodoric, regarded themselves entirely as executors of the Roman heritage.



difference, a more normal people. But Lutheranism itself was able to have this effect only because it was aided by the whole political, economic, and social character of Germany. That it does not alone suffice to explain the German problem is further shown by the fact that the Scandinavian countries, Finland, and the Baltic States are mainly Lutheran, and yet have not shown the same consequences as those observable in Germany. In Sweden, for instance, Lutheranism had results entirely different from those in Germany; not only because Olaus Petri, the leader of the Reformation in Sweden, was, unlike Luther, a convinced humanist, but especially because in Sweden the Lutheran Reformation had to be carried through under Gustavus Vasa with the peasants and against the nobles and against the Catholic pretender, Sigismund of Poland, so that the king and the Lutheran people became leagued together—a league sealed by the Massacre of Linköping (1600), in which the leaders of the nobles were executed. In Germany, on the contrary, the princes and nobles united against the rebelling peasants, who in accordance with Luther's express recommendation were *wie tolle Hunde totgeschlagen*, "beaten to death like mad dogs." It was not simply Lutheran Protestantism that was fatal for Germany, but its association with absolutism and feudalism.

We come, finally, to much the same result when we examine the widespread tendency to find the key to the German problem in the *return to nature*, in *primitivism*, and in *romanticism*, which together form such a noticeable constant in the German nature. We have already devoted sufficient attention to these. They are certainly of great importance, and, as we saw, in their typically German exaggeration have been disastrous traits, but here again we must not ignore the awkward fact that they seem to be a heritage of all the Germanic races, and are observable both in Switzerland—we need only mention Gessner, Bodmer, or Bachofen—and in England as well as in Germany. The innate tendency to Seillière's *mysticisme naturiste* is thus not enough to explain the German problem; other circumstances have had to reinforce that tendency to enable it to develop in the manner peculiar to Germany.

The most amazing of these all too easy explanations of the shortcomings of the average German is a theory that has been presented recently by an American educational mission to Germany. According to its report, it is the lack of democracy in the German educational system that "has cultivated attitudes of superiority in one small group and inferiority in the majority of the members of German society, making possible the submission and lack of self-determination upon which authoritarian leadership has thrived." As a matter of fact, it would be almost as relevant to say that the German character is such because the Germans eat German pancakes or sauerkraut. Apart from the fact that higher education would be killed in any country if it were not reserved to a small minority (to be sure, on the principle of equal opportunity for all), the whole theory founders hopelessly on the other fact that what those experts took for a particular German system of education is the system to be found in most European countries, some of which even have an educational system much more exclusive than the German.

Thus we find again and again that all these theories suffer from the defect of singling out a fact that is not confined to Germany and one that can lead to a satisfying general conclusion only in association with other facts. In each case it is perhaps a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one, for the formation of the problematic Germany into which we are inquiring. In each case we find particular chemical elements that yield the explosive material only in a specific combination.

#### THE CURRENT OF GERMAN HISTORY

The question we now have to answer is something like this: How is it that the central country of Europe, fatally for itself and for Europe, again and again plays a lone hand in the intellectual and political life of this continent, fighting against the spirit of the rest, and that many Germans seem even to be proud of playing this part, as rebels against Europe? We know how complicated the question is. In order at all events to cut a way through the undergrowth, we shall do best to proceed by making the generally accepted assumption, which at bottom is entirely

justified, of two currents of German history, related but different, which united in the nineteenth century—the German current and the Prussian. In doing so we must not forget that at the moment of that union one of the German territories that had played a prominent part in the general current of German history—Austria—was forcibly ejected by Prussia and thereafter went its own way in many things. In doing so, however, this country did not lose its essentially German character, but actually preserved it in a way that may serve in many respects as a model for the rest of Germany. It should be fully conscious of this part even today when it has become an independent nation.

If we begin with the general current of German history and follow it down to the nineteenth century, we may come to three main conclusions:

(1) From the Treaty of Verdun (843), in which Germany was separated from France, until the ending of Germany and her transformation into Greater Prussia (1866), a healthy, genuine, and lasting federation of the German nations, for which their own nature and the geography of Germany called, was never successfully established; nor was a unified state, with which their character was thoroughly incompatible.

(2) German history starts with a situation entirely similar to that of the other peoples of the Continent; but in Germany, largely owing to the failure to establish equilibrium between the whole and its members, in the late Middle Ages and at the beginning of modern times the power was broken of those classes that everywhere else formed a counterpoise to feudalism and absolutism and that created the type of the modern society, essentially liberal and democratic—the towns and the peasantry.

(3) In this feudal and absolutist land certain spiritual influences were at work, particularly the Lutheran Reformation, in a way that may be observed to this day in almost every trait of the economic, social, and spiritual structure of the predominantly Protestant Germany, forming an essential feature of the complicated chemical combination with which we have compared the German national character.

We propose to deal separately with the third point. In what

follows we will summarily examine the first two points. Here it is of special importance to make it clear that a sound federative structure, which has never been successfully achieved in Germany, presupposes equilibrium between the central power and the members, so that the central power may exercise a moderating influence upon the members and vice versa. This equilibrium is thus disturbed not only when the central power throttles the independent life of the members, but also when the members overbear the central power. Germany fell victim to both of these troubles in succession—at first she suffered centuries of anarchy among her overgrown members, and later in Greater Prussia she was burdened with the caricature of a federal state governed centrally in essentials. The second trouble may be regarded as largely a reaction from the first. When in the following paragraphs we describe the weakness of the imperial central power as disastrous, we do not belie our firm conviction that federalism is the first condition of the healthy existence of a state; on the contrary, we confirm it. Anyone who glorifies the anarchy of the old German Empire—the *immane monstrum*, as Pufendorff called it in the seventeenth century—does ill service to the cause of federalism by presenting the caricature as the ideal.

Much sterile argument becomes unnecessary if we remember that we must distinguish not only between centralism and particularism, but between the three possibilities of centralism, particularism, and federalism, and if we further remember that the federalist condemns both centralism and particularism in the name of a sound balance between the center and the members of a state. The present author would be sorry if his book left the impression that he regards the development of particularism in Germany, in which Richelieu and the papacy might be considered as powerful agents, as anything but nefarious. We regret this development because we hold with federalism and not with particularism, which we must insist is so little the same as to be almost the very opposite. In other words, we belong to those who, in the particular case of Germany as well as generally, regard particularism, which neglects the union for the sake of the

members, just as unwholesome as centralism, which neglects the members for the sake of the union, and who are looking for the right balance between both, which we call federalism, and for which Switzerland is the outstanding example. Particularism is an extreme that, by its reactions, might easily lead to the opposite extreme of crushing centralism. Particularism with all its narrowness and stifling parochialism has been exactly the curse of Germany through the centuries, and it was not the least part of this curse that it finally prompted some of the best Germans to seek salvation in the opposite extreme and thus to do violence to the very nature of Germany, which is destined for federalism. In a sense it is quite possible to say that the ultimate answers to Richelieu and the Treaties of Westphalia (1648) have been Bismarck and Hitler. Something similar is happening today, since the absurdities of the separation of zones are the surest way to teach the Germans claustrophobia but not federalism.<sup>2</sup>

Thus we consider that we have every reason to hold to a view that still seems to us, in spite of all the criticism leveled against it by historians, to come nearest to the truth. This view is that Germany, unlike France and England, did not grow steadily into an organic whole, but very soon, though it started similarly to the others, fell victim to a state crisis. While the Capet dynasty early developed into a hereditary monarchy and then, with the aid of the towns, steadily strengthened its position against the nobles, the German emperors failed lamentably in their efforts in this direction. From the beginning of the German expansion toward Italy under Otto I (950), Germany paid for her imperial dreams with an abnormal political and social development that it is not too much to say passed through its many stages to end with Hitler. "Never has a people that served what in its day was regarded as the supreme ideal had to pay so heavily for doing so as the Germans had to pay in the Middle Ages with

<sup>2</sup> The books of the French historian E. Vermeil, *Germany's Three Reichs*, London, 1944, and the British historian G. Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany*, Oxford, 1946, unfortunately both fail in not making the distinction between federalism and particularism, while the first is praising particularism and the second centralism.

their very own—with the sacrifice of the healthy development of their state.”<sup>3</sup> So writes a modern historian who has taken the trouble to be just to those who judge the Italian policy of the German emperors from the point of view of a higher historical mission.

The consequences of this development were incalculable. While at every fresh imperial election, with the blackmail the electors extorted from the candidates, the imperial central authority lost more and more of the little power it had at first possessed, towns and peasantry were increasingly abandoned to the despotism of princes and feudal lords, in spite of all the efforts of various emperors to protect them and to use their support in the imperial struggle against the territorial states. The much-praised “German liberties” were as a rule merely the liberty of princes and feudal lords to oppress their subjects without let or hindrance, and to place them under the heel of their growing bureaucracy. Thus in the end the empire became an indescribable chaos, in which no cultural center could form, imperial territories being filled with never ending feuds. With the territorial fragmentation and the weakness of the central authority went serious class divisions among the population, since neither protection nor arbitrament from above was to be had.

All these consequences made themselves fully felt only from the beginning of the fifteenth century; then they came more and more into notice. Until then, especially in the towns, which owed their charters to the emperors, conditions of freedom, of independent enterprise, of autonomy, and of cultural activity had developed, and in the powerful middle class that had formed here as in all the countries of the West there had come a counter-weight against feudalism and autocracy. Names like the Hansa, the city leagues, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Cologne, the *Meistersinger*, Albrecht Dürer, and Willibald Pirckheimer, and all the art treasures that those cities created and handed down to the Germans as a priceless heritage—until in the Nazi fury against

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Rörig, *Ursachen und Auswirkungen des deutschen Partikularismus*, Tübingen, 1937, p. 9.

the whole world they were largely destroyed—all this needs only to be mentioned in order to recall to everyone that the culture of the medieval cities of Germany was one of the finest flowers of European history. Through this growth of the cities Germany, at least in the west and south, had a full share in one of the principal stages in the emancipation of the West from feudalism and absolutism and in the struggle for political, intellectual, economic, and social progress. When in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Christian Europe at last awakened out of the torpor of the Middle Ages and, after first learning from Islam, outstripped its teacher in art and in intellectual life—in the latter, particularly in scholasticism—these new energies revealed themselves especially among the burghers of the towns, and it may fairly be said that in this respect Germany in no way lagged behind other countries.

It is the peculiar, immeasurable tragedy of Germany that in the later Middle Ages and at the beginning of modern times this flourishing city culture fell victim almost entirely to the weakness of the imperial central authority and the disproportionate strength of the territorial princes and feudal lords. Out of this struggle between emperor, territorial princes, feudal lords, towns, and peasants, came ultimately in Germany not a healthy and liberal state system, uniting the progressive burghers with the emancipation movement among the peasants against the coveters of domination, but a weak, disjointed empire and a pitiful collection of absolutist petty principalities, privileged nobles, and humbled peasants and townsmen—the *immane monstrum* of Pufendorff. Finally, in utter exasperation, the peasants tried to throw off the burden of feudalism, which had become intolerable; but this German peasant revolution of 1525 was suppressed with such ruthlessness that since then the Germans seem to have been purged for all time of the taste for revolutions. It was perhaps the only genuine revolution in Germany, the first and the last; moreover, its motives were entirely legitimate. In it the German rose up for the last time before he was finally brought under the yoke of unconditional obedience to his lords and superiors.

We should bear in mind that the really fatal collapse in German history came immediately after it had attained its zenith, in the downfall of the culture of the German cities, which had been the true glory of the Germans. This downfall was the more tragic in that it came almost at the same time as the suppression of the antifeudal peasant revolution. The combined effect of these two disasters was then confirmed and finally sealed by the political and social consequences of the Lutheran Reformation and by the Thirty Years' War that resulted from it. The backbone of the German townsman and peasant had been so completely broken that to this day there seems no sign of any real recovery. Progress was delayed at least for a whole century, politically, socially, intellectually, and economically. There came upon the scene of history the German "subject," who had to give blind obedience to his "superior," and who acquired a reputation for servility. He was pursued by the recruiting sergeant, oppressed and exploited by his prince, his manorial lord, his squire, and firmly encased in the structure of the feudal, absolutist hierarchy. The principle of servility was further driven in by the pastor, who told him that he must not dare to grumble, since Luther, echoing the injunctions of the apostle Paul, had said: "Let every man be subject to the authority that hath power over him." Out of the upstanding burgher of the medieval town came the pitifully ridiculous figure of the *Spiessbürger* or provincial, whom Goethe describes with kindly irony in the "Easter promenade" in *Faust*. Margrave Ludwig of Baden said forcibly in a letter to Emperor Josef I (1705-11): "To be fearful and of poor spirit is an epidemic ailment of burghers."

Again and again the portrait of this caricature of humanity has been painted, and everybody was familiar with it in countless Germans of yesterday who would have been amazed to learn that they owed the National Socialists anything else than obedience and support. We may add to this portrait the story told us, and vouched for as handed down by oral tradition, of the good tailor who long ago, when the prince was paying a ceremonial visit to his town, put up on his house this inscription:



*Unter deinen Flügeln  
Kann ich ruhig bügeln*

—"Under Thy sway I can iron away." Later, in the Third Reich, there were thousands of variations on the saying "For the employment we are permitted here, we have to thank our Führer." This is clear evidence that the type of our tailor could not yet have been extinct in Germany.

This is the Germany against which, in the eighteenth century, Schiller launched the protests of his youthful dramas, while others sought an escape into the airy heights of the "idealist" philosophy. A man like Lessing had to lead the wretched life of a subordinate official under a dull-witted and capricious tyrant, while Winckelmann preferred to shake the dust of his homeland from his feet and to emigrate to Rome. On the other hand, a man like Goethe will never be entirely understood if we forget that he had the good fortune to grow up as the son of a rich citizen of the free imperial city of Frankfurt. There was no numerous reading public, and writers without private means were driven to live on a pension graciously conferred by a prince, or, like Lessing, on the income from a subordinate office, or else, like Schiller, to work themselves literally to death.<sup>4</sup>

Small wonder that this sort of national experience, prolonged for a thousand years, produced quite special reactions in the German people. They tended to conformity, to implicit obedience, even to servility; they lacked experience, understanding, and interest in all questions of the life of the community; they left the consideration of political issues to the authorities, who could make such decisions as they thought fit; they were almost entirely without any tradition of democratic self-government; they took dangerous *refuge in dreams of the unreal and in the world of words and of abstract ideas*, in which the German found his realm of "inner freedom" (later called "German freedom"). This flight to inwardness went hand in hand with the division of the world, so fateful for the Germans' political morality, into the political and the private sphere, with, in their

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. H. Bruford, *Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Goethezeit*, Weimar, 1936.

view, quite different laws for the two spheres, supposed to be incompatible though coexisting. This was just what Lutheran Protestantism taught, so that the Germans felt strengthened by it in a tendency already suggested to them by their political situation.

Another form of the flight from stern political realities, and again one in which Protestantism—both Lutheran and in this case Calvinist—exerted the strongest possible influence, was the taking refuge in work of the utmost intensity and conscientiousness. Here, probably, as well as in the fundamental German tendency to take things very seriously, is one of the main roots of the German's meticulous industry and of German pedantry, of which we meet with the most curious examples just at this time, after the Thirty Years' War.<sup>5</sup>

This *unhealthy collective existence* of the Germans has had the further most unfortunate result that in Germany neither the aristocracy nor the middle class has been able to develop as a cultural element fixing the national standard, and that in these classes there has always in modern times been a bitter lack of the needed counterweights against the all-powerful state, such as we find in other countries in "public opinion" and, in the English or French sense, in "society."<sup>6</sup> This lack, which was further greatly accentuated by the rift between the religious denominations, shows itself among other things in the fact that in Ger-

<sup>5</sup> On the origin of German scientific pedantry and "diligent mediocrity" and its later development in the nineteenth century, cf. Lord Acton's *Historical Essays and Studies*, London, 1907, pp. 370-1.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted here that in Germany, especially in recent generations, there have been no reviews acting as a true forum for public opinion, such as the French *Revue des deux mondes*, the American *Harper's Magazine* or *Atlantic Monthly*, or the great English monthlies. In Germany those reviews that offered a living reflection of their time and were a true forum for discussion—for instance, the *Neue Rundschau*—were confined to certain circles, while the periodicals read by a wider public carefully avoided the contentious problems of the day. Among the daily newspapers, too, there was a lack of organs such as *The Times*, the *Temps*, or the *Journal des débats*, possessing an authority that bridged over party differences. Every German swore by his habitual paper, his "*Leibblatt*," and learned of the opinion of other people only the caricature offered by this party paper. Such a paper as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* really carried weight as a rule only with an elite, while everybody else dismissed it as the "*Judenblatt*," the "Jew paper."

many there is almost a total absence of the type of literature that we call the society novel. There was a head of the state, but no head of society in any really leading class, whether among the bourgeoisie or the nobility, which as a rule was far from adopting the proud independence of attitude toward the monarchy that might have been expected from it. One result of this was that in Germany, unlike Britain and France, the Jews had not the support of a social class with the prestige and leadership that might have been able to find for them the way to integration in the German nation. It was a tragic peculiarity of the situation of German Jews that they were living with a people that so resembled them, a people just as unbalanced and unsettled as themselves; instead of supporting and complementing each other, Germans and Jews increased the mutual tension between them as in a marriage in which the two partners lack strength and firmness of character. No wonder this marriage was such an unhappy one, with its alternating protestations of love and outbreaks of hate.

Thus everything conspired to place the needed plastic human material in the hands of a government that knew what it wanted, or of one or other of the ambitious despots, whether Friedrich II, Bismarck, or—one has to overcome one's repugnance in bringing this name into such company—Adolf Hitler.

Nobody with any knowledge of the life of peoples and of their history need be reminded that this sketch of German history and of its consequences is much too rough not to be in need of modification at many points. To begin with, we have to bear in mind that, thanks to the very wide variety of German conditions, there are strong *regional differences* to note. Switzerland owes her separate existence to her success in warding off German and Austrian feudalism and absolutism. She released herself entirely from the German realm through the Swabian War (1499). But even leaving Switzerland aside, we may mention Alsace, which belonged to the Reich until the end of the seventeenth century, and also, in a certain sense, the Hansa towns of north Germany, which, owing to their special political situa-

tion, escaped almost entirely from the development described—so much so that even under Wilhelm II an *Oberbürgermeister* of Bremen could behave with such offhand independence of spirit that thereafter the Kaiser is said to have avoided that free imperial city.

But in the rest of Germany, too, feudalism and absolutism were far from uniformly succeeding in humbling their people. Conditions were worse on the whole in Prussia, as we shall show later. But as regards the rest of Germany we must not let the *chronique scandaleuse* of the eighteenth century make us forget, amid the follies of certain *serenissimi*, the high achievements of other German territories. Hanover (then ruled by a sort of Whig aristocracy, to which the world is indebted for the founding of the University of Göttingen), Bavaria, Saxony, Weimar, Baden, and even Bückeburg deserve mention in this connection. Nor must we forget that in Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Oldenburg, Friesland, and Westphalia a class of free and self-reliant peasants had existed from the earliest times, and that this class had possessed a large measure of local autonomy, a counterpart of the self-government of the imperial cities.

A thoroughly complex special case was that of Austria, which would require a very searching analysis.<sup>7</sup> All we will point out about this country, which was a very important part of Germany so long as there was a Germany (that is to say, until 1866), is that, owing to the court atmosphere of Vienna and to the special position of the aristocracy, its sociological structure was in many respects not unlike that of France. Mme de Staël must have had reason for writing of Austria: "Here it is like a French island in the Germanic sea."<sup>8</sup> Of great benefit, also, in the Austrian territories was an agrarian policy that, in strong contrast to Prussia, strengthened the position of the peasant in

<sup>7</sup> The literature concerning Austria is not very extensive. Attention may be called to André Tibal, *L'Autrichien, essais sur la formation d'une individualité nationale*, Paris, 1936; and A. J. P. Taylor, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1815-1918*, London, Macmillan. Highly instructive remarks on Austria are also to be found in Robert Ingram's *After Hitler Stalin?*, Milwaukee, 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Letter of January 14, 1808, to Baron de Barante (from J. de Pange, *Mme de Staël et la découverte de l'Allemagne*, Paris, 1929, p. 80).

relation to the feudal lord,<sup>9</sup> and it must also be borne in mind that in the Middle Ages Vienna was the only German capital city that served as the permanent seat of one of the great territorial princely houses.<sup>10</sup> But we should fail to understand either the significance of Hitler's Austrian origin or such disastrous representatives of the Pan-German warmongering spirit as Othmar Spann and many other Austrians, if we left out of account the manifold tensions and unhealthy developments in Austrian society, with anti-Semitism, the exaggerated nationalism of the Germans of the border, the quite uncourtly bluntness of the Alpine country, and the interdenominational complications.

In addition to these important regional differences, however, attention must be called to another circumstance. We saw how the abnormal course of Germany's political and social history was bound to favor the development of a problematic type of humanity. Now it is not surprising that this history made its mark on the average German; what is astonishing is that in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, in spite of the heavy handicap of their constitutional and social history, a large part of the Germans held out so well. There was a serious, responsible, cultured nobility that could stand comparison with the best aristocracies of western Europe, and this class was actually far excelled by the high qualities of a middle class that even today may serve as a model for us, and that has been described for us in many contemporary works (of these Gustav Freytag's *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* may be consulted) and in the familiar literary memorials by the German classic authors. If we seek the true pattern of one of these bourgeois of the very best sort amid the country's troubles of that time, we need mention only one name, which at the same time is that of one of the highest peaks of the German intellect—Johann Sebastian Bach.

<sup>9</sup> Werner Stark, "Niedergang und Ende des landwirtschaftlichen Grossbetriebs in den böhmischen Ländern," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, 1937, Vol. 146.

<sup>10</sup> Otto Brunner, "Bürgertum und Städtewesen im deutschen Mittelalter," *Das Mittelalter in Einzeldarstellungen*, Vienna, 1930, p. 155.

THE CURRENT OF INTELLECTUAL EVOLUTION AND  
GERMAN COLLECTIVE MORALITY

Before we turn to the other current of German history, the Prussian current, it seems necessary to consider some of the principal stages in the evolution of German intellectual life. Only so shall we be able thoroughly to understand how it could happen that later in the nineteenth century the specifically Prussian current of history absorbed the general German current, and how from the combination of these two there came into existence the Greater Prussia that became a peril for Europe and a disaster for Germany. For it is not Prussia alone but this admixture that explains the tragedy. Even before Prussia took over the leadership, political ideas in Germany had evolved, under the influence of certain intellectual currents, in a direction that led to the ultimate triumph of Prussia.

The thing that interests us here in the evolution of German intellectual life is thus the influence it exerted on the formation of a definite German *collective morality* and a characteristic German *social philosophy*, a morality and a philosophy that later combined to form an essential element in the Greater Prussian mentality. What that means is well known to every foreigner who has ever come into contact with Germans, and also to every German who has gained sufficient detachment for a critical view of his fellow countrymen.

Goethe uttered these famous words:

"I have often felt a bitter sorrow at the thought of the German people, which is so estimable in the individual and so wretched in the generality. A comparison of the German people with other peoples arouses a painful feeling, which I try to overcome in every possible way. And in science and art I have found the wings with which one may raise oneself above it; for science and art belong to the world, and the barriers of nationality disappear before them."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Conversation with H. Luden on December 13, 1813 (*Goethes Gespräche, Auswahl Biedermann*).

This is in harmony with another remark of his:

"Germany is nothing, but every individual German is much, and yet these latter imagine just the opposite. Transplanted and dispersed like the Jews all over the world must the Germans become, in order to develop fully, and to the benefit of all nations, the store of the good that lies in them."<sup>12</sup>

Estimable in the individual and wretched in the generality—that is the classic formulation of the observation, recorded over and over again, that the German, who seems neither better nor worse in his individual morality than the members of other nations, who shows a fairly balanced stock of virtues and failings, and who, indeed, can perhaps make himself liked by a particular warmth of friendship and hospitality, is so liable to give evidence of an appalling unreliability of judgment as soon as he finds himself faced with the ethical questions of the life of the community. Such a German is often a regularly obstreperous individualist in other fields, but in political questions he is generally so unsure of himself that he can cover up his lack of judgment only by uncritically following the biddings of the herd instinct. Then the clever man becomes a dullard, the straightforward man becomes the follower of a Macchiavellian or cynical collective morality in violent contrast with his individual conduct, and this ultimately drives him to defend boorishness and violence and unjust dealing. In these questions of collective morality he discards logic and takes refuge in specious arguments that quickly drive one to break off the discussion as a waste of time. Have we ever, indeed, been able to carry on a useful discussion with a German of this type about the violent deeds of German foreign policy since Bismarck, in the judgment of which the whole of the rest of the world is at one, about the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, about the attack on Belgium in 1914, about the greatness of Polish civilization, about the place of justice and truth in international peace, about the necessity for moderation, for self-restraint, and for candid recognition of one's own mistakes? Who can claim to have

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, note by F. von Müller.

ever pierced the armor of stupid national vanity assumed by such a German in his resourcelessness and his individual mediocrity? And is not this German type appallingly common?

Certainly this remarkable and fatal *separation of individual and collective morality*, which distinguishes the German from other nations, together with the pushing nationalism that comes from it, has grown since Bismarck into that "Prussian complex" with which we shall have later to concern ourselves particularly. Only through this was it possible for the controlling classes in Germany to fall victim so easily to National Socialism. But we need only mention Fichte and Hegel and recall the testimony of many Germans of the past in order to show the probability that the modern "Prussian complex" is the product of a history reaching far back. It need hardly be repeated here that the abnormal collective existence that has imposed their political history on the Germans played an important part in this. In what follows we are concerned only with its roots, which are to be sought in the history of the German mind.

If we follow the evolution of the German collective morality from the Middle Ages to the moment when the current of Prussian history united with the general German current, and gave the German his last fatal impress, we shall have to watch two main streams that sometimes ran alongside each other and sometimes mingled. One is the fundamental German trait of romanticism and mysticism, the other Lutheran Protestantism. Both have occupied us several times already; now they demand joint description.

It is not by a mere chance that the nature and the political consequences of the *romantic and mystical* element in the Germans have been described with special clarity by a French philosopher—Ernest Seillière.<sup>18</sup> During the first period of the Bismarckian regime Seillière had had the opportunity, as a

<sup>18</sup> Among the many works of this very important philosopher, who is not by any means as well known as he ought to be, mention should be made for our purposes of: *Introduction à la philosophie de l'impérialisme*, Paris, 1911; *Le romantisme*, Paris, 1925; *Les pangermanistes d'après-guerre*, Paris, 1924; *Morales et religions nouvelles en Allemagne, le nécromantisme au delà du Rhin*, Paris, 1927.



student in Heidelberg, of making acquaintance with German national pride, and the impression it made on him went far to suggest to him a philosophy of history to which we are indebted for an interpretation of the phenomenon of romanticism in its universal character and a very valuable contribution to the understanding of the genesis of the German collective morality. Seillière showed that what we call romanticism can be traced to a mystical mentality that is among the eternal tendencies of mankind but becomes dangerous the moment it breaches the dike of reason. A romantic mysticism of this sort may make its appearance in very different forms, which Seillière has traced and analyzed in an interesting way—nature-loving (*mysticisme naturiste*), erotic (*mysticisme passionnel*), religious, aesthetic, democratic-social, or national-ethnic.

In these manifold forms the emotional exuberance of the romantic soul, which Seillière contrasts with the classical ideal of due proportion determined by reason, may influence every field of intellectual life and communicate its color to movements that may seem remote from romanticism in the narrower sense. It may also influence directly opposite currents in political life, making its appearance in the form of democratic-social mysticism as "romanticism of the left" or in the form of national-ethnic mysticism as "romanticism of the right," so that without it we should fail to understand either democratism and socialism or conservatism and nationalism. It may appear in one form in one country and in another form in another country, but it is far too much a basic element of the mentality to be entirely missing anywhere; as a matter of fact, Seillière was able to show that it had produced profound effects even in France, the country regarded as "classic," particularly in the French Revolution and all the currents that prepared the way for it or proceeded from it. Undoubtedly—this, too, we have learned especially from Seillière—the deepest root of romantic mysticism is of religious origin and is to be sought in man's longing to be lifted above himself and united with God. Thus there prove to be close relations between romantic mys-

ticism and certain theological currents (medieval mysticism, quietism, pietism, and others), but its basic religious character lies nevertheless in a more or less avowed *pantheism*, which Schleiermacher rightly called the secret religion of the Germans.

If we adopt these explanations from Seillière, we can hardly doubt that *romantic mysticism* in almost all its forms has been a *constant feature of the German mind* through the centuries—so much so that the German may be described as the eternal romantic. It is, so to say, a motif that is always present, even if often it is no more than a soft accompaniment, but sometimes it swells to fortissimo as the dominant melody. We hear it plainly in the medieval mystics—Meister Eckehart, Jakob Böhme, and many others—in German humanism, in Lutheranism, in the German baroque, and in pietism. We find it even in the period that, in contrast to the true German romanticism of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, we call the classic period; and here we find it so marked that historians of literature are hard put to it to make a clear distinction between the classic and the romantic. The German mind has, perhaps, most successfully liberated itself from this inclination to romanticism in Lessing and in the truly “classical” works of Goethe and Schiller, such as *Iphigenie* and *Don Carlos*. But how romantic does *Faust* seem when measured by the standards of French classicism!

It is not surprising that when, at the end of the eighteenth century, the German expressly made romanticism into a program and a tendency that governed everything, he did so with unique gusto. Thereafter it influenced German intellectual life so strongly that at the turn of the last century a well-informed German was able to say that romanticism is “not something past and done with but an element in our midst to this day. Up to the present it has been impossible to overcome it because it has struck root too firmly in German intellectual life and possesses too much fascination for the German mind; and also because it is too closely akin to that which is best and deepest in the German mind. which has itself charmed and

elevated this very romanticism out of the soul of the people.”<sup>14</sup>

We may compare romanticism with a comforting fire to which all European nations have brought logs, and if at times the fire of romanticism flickers a little doubtfully or smolders, even then we rejoice at the manifold variety of the human spirit. Mankind can no more do without Rembrandt than Raphael, Victor Hugo than Molière, Schumann than Mozart, and not even the uncanny elements in such men of genius as E. T. A. Hoffmann or Edgar Allan Poe or De Quincey, Turner or Caspar David Friedrich, can turn us away from them.

But we know that this fire must be carefully tended, and we know what conflagrations have been started by stray sparks. The most fruitful may here become the most dangerous, and as we may depend in any case on the strength of the basic romantic feeling in man, and as instinct and feeling threaten at all times and among all peoples to outgrow reason, we have more ground as a rule for thankfulness to the warning voices and the sober skeptics of romanticism than to its panegyrists. But no country stands more in need of warnings and skepticism than Germany, because no other country is in such danger as Germany from its fundamentally romantic, mystical, anti-intellectual disposition. It is characteristic of Germany that there the fire of romanticism is always at white heat and from time to time blazes out into wild conflagrations. In the basic romanticism of the German there lurks an immoderacy, an unbridled wildness, that has broken out five times in the last two centuries—in the *Sturm und Drang* of the eighteenth century,

<sup>14</sup> Th. Ziegler, *Die geistigen und sozialen Strömungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1901, pp. 56-7. If we recall that in an earlier passage we inferred specifically romantic qualities—unrestrainedness, emotionality, immoderation, etc.—from the German language, we may, indeed, say that the very language reveals the fundamental romantic trait of the Germans. It is the language of an essentially romantic people. It is so in a special degree at all times when it is under the influence of a pronouncedly romantic current, whether that of the *Sturm und Drang* movement of the eighteenth century, or the actual German romantic period of the beginning of the nineteenth, or finally, the youth movement. It will also be difficult to contradict so thoughtful a writer as Fritz Strich when he says (*Deutsche Klassik und Romantik*, 2nd ed., Munich, 1924, p. 400): “Where the German spirit follows its own bent, it is a spirit of romanticism. It can realize its classic ideal only with outside aid.”

in the romantic movement proper, in the "young Germany" movement, in the "youth movement," and finally in its worst and, we must hope, its last excess in National Socialism.

Many repulsive elements were combined in National Socialism, but anyone who wants fully to understand that movement must give it its place in this series of volcanic explosions of romanticism. It is not simply Prussianism; it is also the final degeneration of the romantic and mystical disposition of the Germans.

Particularly clear and direct was this pernicious influence of German romanticism on the collective morality of the Germans in the case of the variety that we may call with Seillière "national-ethnic romanticism." It was especially this that shot up luxuriantly, particularly in Germany, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, after the soil had been prepared by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic invasion. From the exaltation of the German *Volkstum*, or national character, of the German race, of German history and German folklore, from this ecstatic exaggeration of a healthy and fruitful idea, which in Herder had been the noble expression of humanity, there proceeded in a direct line the subsequent Pan-Germanism and finally Nazism. This is the source from which Fichte and Arndt and later Treitschke, Langbehn, Richard Wagner, and Lagarde drew intoxication, and there are few political thinkers and leaders in Germany who have not since enjoyed at least a drop of the stuff. Here begins the bad interpretation of the German nature as something primeval, unique, exclusive, to be understood only through the myth of blood and of racial history. The other interpretation of the German nature through humanity and universality, which is bound up with the great names of Herder, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, and Humboldt, was visibly pushed into the background and after a century was to be met with in only a few isolated figures. Then the German began, with his "German way" that was to "cure the world," his *Deutschland über Alles*, and his "historic missions," to be in the eyes of the world first ridiculous and in the end tiresome. And it is perhaps also in this romantic trend of the German that we must look for an

explanation of his tendency to pity himself as the man whom "nobody in the world understands," for it is one of the striking traits of romanticism to cultivate a morbid sense of the isolation of the individual. This sense is part of the romantic *Weltschmerz* and of Byronic melancholy.

But even the *aesthetic romanticism* has, in Germany, been anything but harmless. The vagueness and dreaminess that it cultivates, corresponding so well with the German nature already described, the somnambulist element, sallow, somber, drawn especially to night and moon and graves—all this points to a morbid state of mind that will do no good.<sup>15</sup> The German's romantic feeling for death, remarked by Clemenceau, probably has its origin here. Only recently the leaders of an SS division in Italy talked of "romantic death" to the neo-Fascists (who were but little impressed), and it is probably for the same reason that the German feels so strangely attracted by the twilight of the gods and the downfall of the Nibelungen. Closely related to this is the inclination of the romantic to abandon himself to an inscrutable fate, sensed *pantheistically*, and to feel that there are at work dark forces of nature or history that crush man. Thus the romantic becomes an antihumanist, a fatalist, and a determinist, and those who are familiar with the history of the German mind since that time know how immensely strong this influence has been, particularly on political thinking. It has even communicated itself to geography, in which Ratzel, in the true spirit of this degenerate romanticism, laid the foundations of an anthropogeography, which later showed its actual antihumane features in the "geographical romanticism" of General Haushofer's "geopolitics," thus separating itself plainly from the "*géographie humaine*" of the French.<sup>16</sup> It is well known that this doctrine of the "blind brutality" (Ratzel) with which geography is supposed to rule

<sup>15</sup> "The logical end of romanticism could only be the longing for death," (Fritz Strich, *op. cit.*, p. 123.) On the other hand, Eichendorff attracts us by the very fact that he freed himself from this morbid romanticism and became "the poet of the morning" (Strich).

<sup>16</sup> Lucien Febvre, *La terre et l'évolution humaine, introduction géographique à l'histoire*, Paris, 1922, p. 21 ff.

the destinies of nations was exaggerated to the point of hysteria by the Nazis, and it may be that this "geopolitics" is one of the most fearful poisons administered to the German, until in the end he ran amuck all over Europe. Romanticism—Ratzel—Haus-hofer—Hitler's war—this, too, is a chain of causes, and probably one of the most fatal. The romantic intoxication from the atlas may be more disastrous than all else. And has it been noticed with what solemnity the modern German speaks the word *Raum* ("space"), how it has for him a weighty significance equaled only by his words for "destiny" and "development," or by "*Kultur*"? And especially, has the German himself noticed it, and does he now know what he has in future to guard against?

We have had several times to oppose romanticism to *humanism*. There is a healthy romantic feeling with which humanism can very fruitfully unite, as has been shown, among others, by Herder. But it is obvious, and has been pointed out by us again and again, that grave dangers lurk here, and that a pronounced and basic romanticism and mysticism is difficult to reconcile with humanism. Probably we have here one reason why, since the beginning of modern times, the Germans have on the whole had less in common than other nations with the Roman humanist ideal, incorporated in the European tradition especially by Cicero and Virgil. A people so impregnated with romanticism and mysticism as the Germans will gain access only with difficulty to that source of European culture. But in addition to this, the Lutheran Reformation loosened the ties with the humanist tradition in Germany and seriously widened the gulf between German culture and the European tradition, a gulf that in any case the German can cross only with difficulty and by means of self-education. Whatever one may think of the Reformation in other respects, it cannot be denied that it threw Germany back centuries in her relation to the humanist culture of the West. It may fairly be said that the ground lost has not been recovered to this day, and that it is only now that the German is faced with the actual task of cultivating humanism, after pursuing to the most bitter end the path of antihumanism.

This brings us now to the consideration of the other great main stream in the history of German collective morality, *Lutheran Protestantism*. There is an ample and valuable literature on this subject, and its exponents have reached increasing agreement in all essentials, so that we may deal briefly with it—all the more since we have already touched upon this important subject several times.<sup>17</sup>

For reasons connected partly with Lutheran theology, partly with Luther's personality, and partly with Germany's political character, the Lutheran Reformation bears the principal responsibility for the fact that the German was trained to make the separation of the spheres of political and private life that we recognize as one of the most unfortunate aspects of German collective morality. In that school he has learned that the state and policy correspond to man's evil nature and consequently follow their own brutal laws, and that therefore the moral laws that are binding for our individual behavior are not *ipso facto* applicable to the state, and that in the face of this harsh outer world the true Christian must turn his thoughts the more devoutly inward to his own soul and its salvation.<sup>18</sup> Thus there are two realms, that of the hard outer world and that of a man's own soul. The two are entirely separate from each other, and thus demand quite different conduct; they may even be ruled by opposite moral principles without disturbing each other. In the realm of the state and of policy I may be ruthless and crafty, in the realm of the individual self I may be philanthropic, truth-loving, and pious; in the former I may submit to the

<sup>17</sup> On the effects of the Reformation on the collective morality and the political philosophy of the Germans, cf. Helmuth Plessner, *Das Schicksal deutschen Geistes im Ausgang seiner bürgerlichen Epoche*, Zurich, 1935; Georges de Lagarde, *Recherches sur l'esprit politique de la Réforme*, Paris, 1926; Fritz Kem, "Luther und das Widerstandsrecht," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, Vol. 37, Weimar, 1916; Hugo Ball, *Die Folgen der Reformation*, Munich, 1924; F. von Hügel, *The German Soul*, London, 1916.

<sup>18</sup> What results ultimately follow from such a theology is shown especially plainly in the work of the Lutheran Friedrich Naumann, *Briefe über Religion*, 6th ed., Berlin, 1916—well criticized by von Hügel, *op. cit.*, p. 48 ff. Similar ideas are expressed in the writings of Ernst Troeltsch (especially in those published during the First World War), though far more mildly.

tyranny of a despot, in the latter I may enjoy the freedom that in that doctrine is called "inner freedom" ("German freedom").

It is easy to see what consequences for collective morality must follow from such a doctrine. One will be that those people who separated the "inner" from the "outer" freedom, and who regarded the former alone as essential, would care little for the "outer" freedom and would thus become the obedient subjects that just suited the German princes and nobles. As it is put in Luther's famous hymn "*Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*":

*Lass fahren dahin;  
Sie haben kein Gewinn,  
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben—*

"Let them have their way; it avails them nought, ours still must be the Kingdom."

Thus this doctrine meant for the Germans a *school of non-resistance against the power of the state, of political indifference, of ready acceptance of the political situation at any moment, and of submission to the authorities* in all questions of public life. The result was that compensation for the restriction on political activities was found in the day's work, in family life, in the small circle of friends (*die Stillen im Lande*, the gentle souls of the countryside, as the pietists of the eighteenth century put it), and in the enrichment of the inner life. Thus the *Tüchtigkeit* of the Germans—their industry and solid worth in private life—and their political indifference are two aspects of one and the same process; thanks to Lutheranism the German *virtù* (to use Macchiavelli's word for the qualities of courage and public spirit) struck inward.

At least as fatal, however, for the Germans as this education in *Staatsfrömmigkeit*, or piety toward the state, and in political indifference, was another consequence of the distinction drawn between the public and private spheres, a consequence for which Lutheranism also bears the main responsibility. It was the education in a collective morality that denied in politics the bases of a humanist-Christian morality, in other words a *natural-*



*istic collective morality*, which had the dangerous tendency of glorifying the national power and making it a supreme aim that sanctified the means to it. This is the seed from which can come power politics, imperialism, Macchiavellianism, and Realpolitik, and we know that these evil fruits ultimately ripened in Germany. But as it was always merely a question of a tendency that could mature only under special conditions, and one that had to fight against the noble counterforces in the German soul, we can understand the struggle that went on in Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries between the Christian-humanist and the naturalistic collective morality. The latter won through only at the moment when the influence of Lutheran Protestantism united with the other influence of national-ethnic romanticism in that philosophy which was very misleadingly called "idealistic," and which found its best-known expression in Fichte and Hegel.<sup>19</sup> Until then the political thinking of the average German had been entirely un-Macchiavellian, unpolitical, and cosmopolitan, but about the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century there came a true revolution, in which *Lutheranism and romanticism were fused by the hard experience of the Napoleonic invasion*.

Looking more closely, we see that the Lutheran separation of politics from private life, combined with the absolutist regime prevalent in Germany, opened three different paths for the development of collective morality. The *first* was that of indifference to practical politics, united with a lofty idealism in the realm of political ideas. There was a withdrawal from the harsh reality of the state that simply demanded obedience, and of the power of evil in the world, into the secret realm of ideas, into the development of personality apart from the state or even against it (Wilhelm von Humboldt), and into a cosmopolitanism of an abstract type, in which it was possible to move the more freely since there was no need to take account

<sup>19</sup> This whole process has been described especially by the German historian Friedrich Meinecke (*Die Idee der Staatsräson in der deutschen Geschichte*, 2nd ed., Munich, 1925; *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, 7th ed., Munich, 1928). For earliest history cf. also O. Woodtli, *Die Staatsräson im Roman des deutschen Barock*, Frauenfeld-Leipzig, 1943.

of the conflicts of the real world. To this extent the separation had the result of confining men entirely to the "inward" and leaving the "outward" to look after itself. It may fairly be said that this is the stage in which German political thinking remained on the whole in the age of the German classics. The *second* path forced itself upon the Germans when they were rudely recalled by the French Revolution and by Napoleon to political realities that could not be ignored. Under the influence of the Lutheran tradition men were then faced with the temptation to turn the distinction between the two spheres into a distinction between the standards to be applied. That brought the ill-famed Macchiavellianism that started in Germany about the turn of the century. But at the same moment there was already visible a *third* possibility. This was offered when this dualism between politics and private life was felt to be unsatisfactory, and men felt the desire to overcome it, but were too much under the influence of romanticist and organicistic <sup>20</sup> thinking to be able to effect the transition to the natural humanist-Christian tradition. Instead of regarding society as proceeding from the individual, and collective from individual morality, the opposite path was taken of *bringing politics into the private sphere*, a course that was bound to end in the *total state* and in *collectivism*. Thus it was a contemporary of Fichte and Hegel, the muddle-headed romanticist Adam Müller, who advocated a state in which "private life is nothing else than national life regarded from below, and public life is in the last resort nothing but the same national life seen from above."<sup>21</sup> It was from this Adam Müller that, a century later, the Austrian sociologist Othmar Spann drew in order to seduce a large part of the students of the German universities into a romanticist totalitarianism and nationalism. Now that the Germans have tried these three by-paths to which the traditional doctrine of the dualism between the sphere of politics and that of the individual leads, and have realized that the first is impracticable and the other two lead to disaster, there remains to them only the *fourth* alternative

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Bertrand de Jouvenel, *Du pouvoir* (Geneva, 1945), p. 82 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from F. Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, p. 140.

of at least returning to the highroad of the European tradition and, in the spirit of Christian and humanist principles, starting, in politics as elsewhere, from the individual and his personal moral code.

What is particularly unfortunate is that the second and third lines of this political thinking are not in the least mutually exclusive. Just when they are combined, and Macchiavellianism is no longer advocated in opposition to an autonomous individual sphere but in the name of an organicist conception of society and state that attributes to the "state," the "nation," or the "people" a life of its own over and above that of the individuals, and when the last vestiges of the individualist philosophy are sacrificed, even in the private sphere, to the collectivist philosophy—precisely then we are bound to get a formulation, without any reservation whatever, of the Macchiavellian philosophy of power. What that may lead to in the end has been shown by totalitarianism. However, we must on no account forget that it was the French Revolution that introduced to the European peoples, and especially to the particularly susceptible Germans, the doctrine of the collective nature of the "nation."<sup>22</sup> The fact that it spread the idea in the name of "liberty" can surprise only those who regard a dangerous collective morality as a monopoly of "reactionaries," and who are unaware of the large number of democrats who at all times have been chauvinists and imperialists.

At that time, however, a century ago, few seem to have been farsighted enough to realize the full scope of this new *collective morality, born of pantheism, Protestantism, and romanticism*, the origination of which has to be credited mainly to Hegel and Fichte. One of those few was, once more, Heinrich Heine, who wrote in 1834 in his *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* these prophetic words:

Once the taming talisman, the Cross, breaks to pieces, there rattles out again the savagery of the old fighting men, the unreasoning berserk fury of which the Nordic poets sing and say so much. That talisman

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the excellent remarks on this in Bertrand de Jouvenel, *Du pouvoir, histoire naturelle de sa croissance*, Geneva, 1945, p. 69 ff.

is rotten, and the day will come when it will pathetically collapse. The thought precedes the deed, as lightning thunder. The German thunder is, indeed, German, and is not very nimble, and rolls along a bit tardily; but come it will, and when once you hear its crash, as it has never yet crashed in the world's history, know ye: the German thunder has at last attained its object. At that roar the eagles will fall dead from the sky, and the lions in the farthest deserts of Africa will put their tails between their legs and creep into their royal dens. There will be produced in Germany a play compared with which the French Revolution may well seem no more than an innocent idyl.

It took a full hundred years for this vision of Heine's to become reality in National Socialism. In that period much had to happen to turn the Germany of humanism, cosmopolitanism, and Christian uprightness into the other Germany that has now come to its end in a frightful explosion. Fichte's teaching of nationalism and power politics took a long time to establish itself against the better German tradition. It had to absorb many other elements—historicism, positivism, materialism, and much else—in order to develop its full corrupting power. A Treitschke was needed, and a Nietzsche, and many others. But to win over the Germans completely and to become politically effective, that philosophy required a Prussia to turn it into battalions and into factories, and the Prussian current of history had to absorb the general German current that we have been considering in its manifold composition.

#### THE CURRENT OF PRUSSIAN HISTORY

Naturally Prussia, and before her Brandenburg, shared in the general German evolution whose fatal characteristics we have been considering. But in that country, which for centuries had an existence of its own outside the realm of the true German state and people, there came an evolution of its own in addition to all that it shared with the evolution of the rest of Germany. It is necessary fully to grasp this in order to understand that in spite of everything, Germany and Prussia—Weimar and Potsdam—are two different worlds. Over this individual Prussian evolution, official Prussian historiography has deliber-

ately thrown a veil, so that to this day, outside the circle of the initiated, much too little is known about it; and without that knowledge we cannot understand the subsequent political, intellectual, economic, and social evolution of Germany in the nineteenth century, which mainly bears the Prussian stamp. Indeed, the difference between the nature of the Prussian and that of the German west of the Elbe is so marked that in most cases, to this day, it is easy to determine without asking whether a German belongs to the original Prussia or not. There is an elementary truth in the widespread view that Prussia has been the evil genius of Germany—incorporated especially in two personalities, Friedrich II<sup>23</sup> and Bismarck. For a theory that is so popular nowadays there is even amazingly much truth in it.

For our purposes it is sufficient if we note the following essential points:

(1) The Elbe and the Saale roughly form the frontier line that divides the ancestral country of the Germans from the colonial Germany won—some of it not until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—from Slav tribes by conquest, extermination, and enslavement, or by peaceful settlement. This distinct dualism of evolution has had consequences lasting to this day. Without entering upon the seductive question of racial mixture and its possible consequences, we may say that this environment of the east was bound to create the type of the *colonial German*, characterized in all classes by hardness, resolution, resourcefulness, alertness, and a shrewdness in daily life that borders on unscrupulousness, and in the upper class by the habit of command, while the lower class is marked by an equally strong habit of obedience. These conquering invaders of the East became victims of the pitiless nemesis of all imperialism, which, while subjugating others, makes the conquering race itself, if it is to maintain its position, the slave of its leaders. It was not entirely

<sup>23</sup> On the fateful bearing on Germany of the career of Friedrich II, it is possible now to consult K. Thieme, *Das Schicksal der Deutschen, ein Versuch seiner geschichtlichen Erklärung*, Basle, 1945. Cf. also O. Klopp, *Der König Friedrich II von Preussen und seine Politik*, 1867; Franz Mehring, *Die Lessing-Legende*, Stuttgart, 1893; Fr. Hertz, *Nationalgeist und Politik*, Vol. I, Zurich, 1937, p. 64 ff.; P. Gaxotte, *Frédéric II*, Paris, 1938.

without justice that Lessing, in a letter to Nicolai, described Prussia as "the most slavish country of Europe," and that Winckelmann, himself a Prussian, always thought "with horror" of his own country and of his king, Friedrich II.

From this dualism between Germany and the eastern territory there proceeded—and this again is of critical importance—a *dualism in the agrarian system*. In west and south agrarian history ran much the same course as in the rest of western Europe, a minority of peasants remaining entirely free, while the rest under the manorial system (*Grundherrschaft*) had the chance of gradually rising to be free peasants. In the east, in place of this system a large part of the peasantry was driven from the land, and there developed a system of *Gutsherrschaft*, under which great farming properties were run with the aid of serfs or bondsmen. In some cases this latter system assumed forms closely resembling the system of Negro plantations,<sup>24</sup> which appeared at about the same time in the West Indies. In the east the agrarian system was marked by the predominance of *Rittergüter* or baronial estates and by a social system in which a class of estate-owning nobles was served, with no extensive intermediate peasant class, by the mass of the "men," that is to say, by landless serfs. In the west, in contrast with this, was a varied system under which peasants with farms of widely varying size and with every degree of personal or material freedom were found alongside landowners who confined themselves to small farms of their own, together with the type of the squire living on his rents, the very opposite of the skin-flint, profiteering capitalist farmer.

The great difference between the position of the ground landlord west of the Elbe and the Junker east of the Elbe produced a great difference in human types, which were well aware of this difference and which were led by it into mutual dislike—the type of the generous, cultivated grand seigneur of the west, and the other type of the Junker, the "monocled peasant," who united the petty profit-seeking and the craftiness of the bad type of peasant with the arrogance and domineering spirit of

<sup>24</sup> Cf. H. Pirenne, *History of Europe* (George Allen & Unwin).

the feudal lord. The character, indeed, of the Prussian Junker—his aggressive style, his conceitedness, his lack of tact and of intuition, his grabbing at every small advantage, so painfully evident even in the private life of Bismarck<sup>25</sup> or Hindenburg, his craftiness, and the rest—must be held responsible for many things that have made Prussia and the Prussianized German so hated. It is no mere chance that the liberal reforms of the decayed state of Friedrich II after the collapse of 1806 were carried through by a knight of the empire from Nassau (Stein), a Hanoverian noble (Hardenberg), the son of a Hanoverian peasant (Scharnhorst), and a Saxon officer (Gniesau), and were sabotaged by the Prussian Junkers.<sup>26</sup>

This circumstance, that the Elbe divides a western Germany with predominantly peasant farming from an eastern Germany of predominantly feudal large-scale farming, explains also why in the west and south the whole social system shows an equilibrium that in Hanover, Westphalia, and southern Bavaria approaches perfection, and the class differences are much less acute than in the east. Prussia, with its much thinner stratum of peasants and middle-class town dwellers, has always been a stony soil for liberalism, individualism, and the middle-class virtues, while it offered at all times the most favorable conditions for every sort of collectivism.

(2) Owing to its social history, Prussia has not only been a country with few peasants but has also become the country in which the *towns* have made least progress, and the few that grew up were soonest and most ruthlessly robbed of their liberties. It is entirely characteristic of the Prussian mentality that there was a poet in Prussia, Willibald Alexis, who actually sang the praises of that enslavement of the towns by the Hohenzollerns. Thus Prussia became not only the country with fewest peasants but also the country with the smallest middle class,

<sup>25</sup> The journals of L. Bamberger especially (*Bismarcks grosses Spiel*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1932), provide many examples of Bismarck's petty profit-seeking and his almost naïve egoism.

<sup>26</sup> It was mainly owing to this sabotage that the emancipation of the peasants in Prussia turned a great part of the peasants into proletarians, from whom was then recruited the first industrial proletariat in Germany.

and thus sociologically the most "Eastern" country of Germany, and the country that was reached latest and least effectively by the struggle of the West for emancipation from absolutism and feudalism.

For these and various other reasons the Prussian state acquired a character that has not escaped the notice of any keen-sighted observer—the character of a thoroughly artificial state, not based on any common racial history but greedily gathered together and held together only by a monarchy, bureaucracy, army, and military prestige, a highly organized and mechanized state without a soul, ruled in the harshest and most unimaginative way. It is the state of which Mirabeau said: *La Prusse n'est pas un pays qui a une armée, c'est une armée qui a un pays*,<sup>27</sup> and Novalis: "No state has been administered more like a factory than Prussia since the death of Friedrich Wilhelm I."<sup>28</sup> Thus, as the model of mechanistic organization, this state has always had the sympathy of the rationalists, advocates of "scientism,"<sup>29</sup> collectivists, and organization cranks of all countries, from the French Encyclopedists, who were the best of propagandists for Friedrich II, down to Professor Carr and other collectivists of our day.

As we saw earlier, absolutism and feudalism were the destiny of all Germany. But while outside Prussia they were mitigated by the more complex and more organic character of society, by a certain passive *laissez faire*, by a good-natured slackness, and in not a few cases by a truly liberal spirit, in Prussia they were rationalized, mechanized, and made into a system, until the Prussian state had become a regular clockwork in which the individuals were simply cogwheels. Here in Prussia everything

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from O. Guerlac, *Les citations françaises*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1933, p. 231. The originator of the famous saying is there given as the Hanoverian statesman Rehberg.

<sup>28</sup> Novalis, "*Fragmente und Studien*," *Schriften*, edited by Kluckhohn, Vol. II, p. 56. It was a leading Prussian historian (Otto Hintze, *Historische und politische Aufsätze*, Vol. I, p. 32) who described the state created by Friedrich II as "an artificially calculated system, a machine," adding: "When the momentum of the monarchial drive failed, the machine came to a stop."

<sup>29</sup> Professor Hayek's remarkable study "Scientism and the Study of Society," in *Economica*, August 1942, February 1943, and February 1944.



had to be done on the model of the smart shouldering of arms and the parade march.

Outside Prussia absolutism and feudalism had generally been bad enough. Only too often they were unintelligent, petty, cruel, extravagant, and even contemptible; but they were scarcely ever of the Prussian demonic consistency. The Prussian state was a machine of which it could not even be said that it suited nobody else it was at least made for the pleasure of the prince; it seemed to be running for its own sake, and it was just this feature that was inhuman and weird. Here was a pure efficiency that had ceased to be simply the means to some sensible end, but instead was itself demanding the implicit obedience of which we have seen the social and intellectual origins. Hence the Prussian mania for organization, hence the much-praised thoroughness, even exceeding that of the rest of Germany; hence the mistrust of everything improvised, the hardness considered a duty and accordingly prized as a virtue, the dry prosiness, the parade of superiority to all "slacker" peoples, the humorlessness, and the fixed idea (philosophically sublimated in Kant's *Ethics*) that duty<sup>80</sup> demands the suppression of human feeling and that whatever a man does attains a higher worth if it is done "for its own sake." Hence the sinister type of man who, perhaps entirely normal and even good-natured as an individual, at once becomes a marionette when the call comes to perform his functions in the well-oiled collective machine—a marionette capable of turning into a devil. Hence the German slave to duty and labor, raised to a power that later gave the economic life of all Germany the repellent character of sterile activity and of a fever for work that lost all account of any reasonable objective. The "frozen features," the heel-clicking, the angular bowing, the convict's haircut ("Mongol's tuft"), the lack of natural grace—all these things, and many others,

<sup>80</sup> How deeply Kant's whole philosophy is rooted in the soil of his Prussian mother country has been shown especially by Max Scheler (*Die Ursachen des Deutschenbasses*, Leipzig, 1917, p. 190 ff.). The totally different outlook of the non-Prussian is expressed by Schiller when in his essay "*Über Anmut und Würde*" he charges Kant with having taken thought only "*für die Knechte*," for the serving men, and not for "*die Kinder des Hauses*," the children of the house.

smack unquestionably of Prussia; and not a few of them were taken over by Nazism and further coarsened, with the exception of many good qualities of the Prussian and with the exception of the moral reservations that set fixed limits even to Prussian policy.

It is possible to admire this sort of efficiency and discipline, especially if it is bound up with a certain rough uprightness; but people with these characteristics will not be liked. For the very reason that they achieve military conquests so easily, they will fail the more completely to achieve moral ones. Naturally they see that they are not popular, but since they will seek the reasons anywhere but in themselves, two sorts of physical reaction are understandable. One consists in the determined effort to prove with their characteristic thoroughness that they are in very truth likable and superior fellows—the old Friedrich Wilhelm I, who shook his stick in the street at his Berliners and shouted to them that the rascals *had* to like him. (In recalling this story we cannot help noting the curious irony of the fact that in our own day another Prussian bearing the same Christian names as this king, Friedrich Wilhelm Förster, though long since an exile, has been recommending to the Allies a treatment of the Germans that amounts exactly to the King's stick and his summons to the Berliners to love him.) The other reaction consists in turning away resentfully, in wounded self-esteem, from the blind and evil world that cannot appreciate merit and entirely fails to understand men of capacity. The first reaction led to continual *push* and *propaganda*, which under the Nazis were carried to maniacal extremes; the second to *persecution mania* and *self-pity* capable of producing a pronounced collective defiance neurosis.

These few remarks, confined to the main essentials, show that the conception of a Prussian distinct from the general German character is far from being mere imagination on the part of the non-Prussian and the foreigner. But this conception has its limits and must not be made into a schematic explanation of everything. To begin with, we know from what has already been said here how many traits Prussian and non-Prussian Ger-

mans have in common; in not a few cases the "Prussian" seems to us to be a mere exaggeration of the "German." In the second place, our survey of the evolution of the German mind has shown us how much that is dangerous has accumulated in the last few centuries actually in the mind of the non-Prussian German. Thirdly, however, it is indisputable that the Prussian predominance in recent generations has had the result of Prussianizing the rest of Germany in a high degree, and not only the territories acquired through the Vienna Congress or those annexed in 1866 but all southern Germany, too—of course, in differing degrees, in inverse proportion to the power of resistance conferred by tradition, racial character, social stratification, or religious confession. Again and again it may be observed that the Prussianized German of south and west is the most insufferable type, since, with the zeal of the convert, he overdoes the Prussian element to the point of caricature. Some of the most repulsive of the Nazis (not only Hitler, but Goebbels, Himmler, and Göring, among others) were not Prussians—just as in the nineteenth century one of the philosophers of Prussianism was a Swabian (Hegel), another a Saxon (Treitschke), and a third a Bavarian Jew (Stahl).

## GREATER PRUSSIA FROM BISMARCK TO HITLER

### THE MEETING OF THE CURRENTS OF GERMAN AND PRUSSIAN HISTORY

**I**N the course of the nineteenth century the two historic currents we have been observing, the general German one and the specifically Prussian one, steadily approached each other, until in the critical years from 1864 to 1871 they united, with the Prussian predominating. In 1866 Germany ceased to exist, after a life of nearly a thousand years, and her place was taken by what can only be called a Greater Prussia. It was this Greater Prussia that in the spring of 1945 came to a frightful end, an end that corresponded to its violent origin and its character.

In order to gain a secure point of departure for the considerations that follow, we must first become quite clear as to the exact significance of this transformation of Germany into Greater Prussia by the great magician Bismarck. This is the more necessary since all of us—inside and outside Germany, in the camp of her enemies no less than in that of her friends—are still, consciously or unconsciously, under the influence of Prussian-inspired historiography. This, thanks to the caliber of its chief representatives, but thanks also to a contemporary spirit so favorable to the Prussian ideology—the cult of the colossal, the worship of success, historical evolutionism, and the overrating of purely material progress—has almost monopolized the forming of the general opinion. Everyone is still under its spell who speaks, even with reluctance, about the genius of Bismarck, and who regards the empire he created as the inevitable

and unshakable product of history. This view overlooks the fact that Bismarck's greatness consisted fundamentally, as today we clearly recognize, only in his ability to master, both in home and in foreign policy, a hopelessly muddled situation of his own creation. The mastering of such a situation was a clever trick of a performer who had himself arranged conditions that added to its difficulties, but unfortunately the conditions remained, and, indeed, grew worse, while in the course of time the juggler had to go. Thus today we see Bismarck's "greatness" as entirely relative, and we see all the more plainly the fatal work of this figure, who in the end, in his cynicism and nihilism, could do nothing but disintegrate and destroy, unlike the two really great statesmen of his time, Gladstone and Cavour. We have also to remember the parallelism between Bismarck and Friedrich II, which lies not only in the similar character of their personalities and policies, but also in the fact that Friedrich's state, like Bismarck's, had become a machine that only a genius could control.

When the admirers of the Bismarckian empire overlook this and fail to see the fatal weakness of Greater Prussia, they are mistaken not only about the person and the achievement of Bismarck. As a rule they know little of Germany's pre-Prussian and extra-Prussian history, so that, in their ignorance of Germany's real nature as a nation of nations, they are easily led to apply to that country the historical formula that fits the story of the other European peoples. In view of this it is not going too far to say that the history of Germany for the last two hundred years needs to be entirely rewritten.

We need today to be clear in our minds at last that Germany's unification by Bismarck's "blood and iron" policy of 1866-71 was a solution by force that pushed Germany in the form of Greater Prussia along the path that inevitably led past the stages of 1914, 1933, and 1939 to the catastrophe of today, to disaster alike for Germany and for Europe. This shows the truth of what a farseeing and humane man, the great Hanoverian historian A. H. L. Heeren, wrote as long ago as 1817—that the preservation of the loose federative character of Ger-

many was in the highest interest of Germany and of Europe, making that country a bulwark of European peace, while a centralized Germany, owing to its situation and its resources, would not long resist the temptation to strive for hegemony over Europe.<sup>1</sup> These were thoughts that later Constantin Frantz, a writer who was an opponent of Bismarck and who has come back into honor today, adopted and elaborated. There were thus at least some men who were under no illusions as to what a rigidly united Germany would mean for German freedom and for the peace of Europe.

In order to arrive at a correct judgment of Prussia's "unification" of Germany, we must also remember that it was in strong contrast to that of Italy, which took place at the same time. *Italian unification* was the outcome of a popular movement, democratic and liberal in character, at the head of which the house of Savoy had the good sense to place itself. German unification took place amid contempt and suppression of the democratic movement and by means of "blood and iron," that is to say civil war, conquest, broken pledges, intimidation, flattery, and bribery, by the ultimate hegemony of Prussia, and by the artificial whipping up of German nationalism against France. Not all of Mazzini's dreams were fulfilled, but Cavour represented the democratic and liberal tradition, while Bismarck stood for its opposite. Italy's national flag was that of Cavour and Garibaldi and of a monarchy whose origin was based on the assent of the Italian people; whereas there could be no question of any such assent in the case of the Hohenzollerns, and a German would be embarrassed if he had to say just what the German flag is. There is no German flag that symbolizes, in a way binding on all Germans, the unity of Germany, because there never has been a German unity, of really organic character, sanctioned by the will of the people.

Considering the German problem from another angle, we realize that the method by which Bismarck unified Germany was essentially the same as that chosen by Hitler in our day for his policy of "unifying" Europe—the method of the "blood

<sup>1</sup> A. H. L. Heeren, *Historische Werke*, 1817, Vol. II, p. 423 ff.

and iron" policy of conquest and all the other evil means used. We need only recall how in 1866 Hanover or the free imperial city of Frankfurt was treated by Bismarck and his generals in order to see that the policy Bismarck pursued on the national plane was copied seventy years later on the international plane by Hitler. What sort of "united" state was it, indeed, that Bismarck had brought into being by hook or by crook, not shrinking even from bribing the reluctant King Ludwig II of Bavaria with money stolen from another prince, King George V of Hanover?

In drawing these parallels between Bismarck and Hitler we have in view, of course, only the similarity in principles; the difference in degree of brutality is as great as that between the persons of Bismarck and Hitler, or that between a still civilized epoch and our own age of unashamed barbarism. This difference, together with the difference that what Bismarck united was, after all, the German people, explains why his success was considerably more lasting than Hitler's. But we must also not forget that this success was attained only after the unparalleled cleverness—including, it is true, the cleverness in monkeying with the famous Ems telegram—with which he had exploited the old grievance that the Germans had nursed against France ever since the wars of conquest of Louis XIV and of Napoleon, and which had flared up again during the nineteenth century. The very fact that Bismarck had to resort to this cynical means of arousing German nationalism against the French shows plainly how artificial and how morally unsound were the foundations on which he built up German unity. Under that star the Reich was born, and under the same star it was bound in time to perish.

If Germany was to become a unitary state on the model of Britain, France, or Italy, there was probably no other way but that of brute force, for the simple reason that such a centralism was utterly opposed to the true *federative character* of the country, acquired through a thousand years of history, as a nation of nations. It is more than just an amusing hypothesis to picture all that would have happened if Queen Victoria had

not unfortunately been a woman, and so, under the Salic law, excluded in 1837 from succession to the throne of Hanover. It is more than probable that no Prussian statesman would then have been able to stand in the way of the forces that had worked for that loose federation of the German states for which Professor Heeren, with the vision of the true historian, had called. The immeasurable consequences of Queen Victoria's sex—Pascal's "*le nez de Cléopâtre*"!—cannot be undone, but even today it is not too late to proceed along the other path from that trodden after the separation of the crowns of Great Britain and Hanover and the arrival of Bismarck. It is the only path left, now that Bismarck's has led into the abyss.

The unfortunate course of events shows us now, with cruel clarity, that Bismarck's unification of Germany was a monstrous tour de force. It was a solution against the nature of things, and therefore no true solution. That should have been clearly recognized at the time, and there was no lack of men who had that clear vision, both within and without Germany. But scarcely anyone saw the artificial and truly revolutionary character of the Bismarckian policy sooner or more clearly than the French historian Ernest Lavisse, who as early as 1873 described the foundation of the empire as a revolution that had been "too rapid and factitious," and who said of it: "Carried out by force and by trickery, it has abruptly broken with the historic traditions of Germany, encouraged the daring schemes of dreamers, and proved the efficacy of well-prepared surprise attacks."<sup>2</sup> It was indeed a revolution in the true sense of the word—a violent and abrupt breach of law and of organic evolution, which at a blow destroyed the traditional Germany and put in its place another Germany that, by its very origin, had been taught to place faith in speculative adventure and in the success of "well-prepared surprise attacks."

All the means by which this Reich had to be kept alive corresponded with that violent origin, and so did the whole resulting atmosphere—the unceasing high tension of home and foreign

<sup>2</sup> *Revue des deux mondes*, September 15, 1873 (reprinted in E. Lavisse, *Etudes sur l'Allemagne impériale*, Paris, 1888, p. 160).



policy, the autocratic method of government, the universal nervous strain, the growing social unrest, the stifling of democratic and liberal elements, the suppression of every marked personality in politics, the growth of socialism and its ruthless persecution at times, the *Kulturkampf*, the use of every possible intoxicating drug, including the particularly dangerous anti-Semitism; the scramble for colonies, the neurotic character of the foreign policy, particularly under the highly neuropathic Wilhelm II, and the vicious circle of growing mistrust of Germany and correspondingly increasing German jumpiness and indiscretion, a vicious circle that ended in the First World War. Long before the outbreak of the First World War it was clear to any observer not dazzled by the superficial splendor of the Reich that it was in a most dangerous and chronic crisis of its constitution, of its government, of its treatment of minorities, of its economic and social structure, and of its foreign policies.<sup>3</sup> But it was, above all, the forced character of the Reich that compelled its leaders to find a substitute to make good the lack of any natural German patriotism that could be taken for granted, an *Ersatz* that made up in noisiness what it lacked in genuineness. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that all German history from Bismarck to Hitler was one long series of shouts of "Germany awake!"—but the more hysterical these shouts became, the more they proved that there was no real and genuine echo. From beginning to end there had to be a search for "hereditary enemies," an agitation for a "place in the sun," a flaunting of the boggy of "encirclement," and the stimulation of a true persecution mania. It had been possible for Bismarck to keep more or less a cool head, but his successors grew more and more agitated until the peak of hysteria was reached under Hitler. Worst of all, the very soul of the Germans was seduced and the mentality developed that we may call the "Fridericus-Potsdam-Realpolitik" complex. The "re-education"

<sup>3</sup> The best picture of this lamentable state of the German Reich before 1914 is given in a book written by a prominent Swiss historian of that time, William Martin, *La crise politique de l'Allemagne contemporaine*, Paris, 1913.

of the Germans under Prussian leadership had been lamentably successful.

But had not the setting up of Prussian hegemony over Germany been, at least at the outset, an act of violence against the rest of the Germans?

Matters were not so simple as that, either in the case of the Bismarckian Reich or later in that of National Socialism. Seldom, indeed, does a conquest really succeed unless there either exists or quickly develops a certain inner preparedness of the conquered.

At this point we must remind our readers of the results to which we were led by our inquiry into Germany's mental development, and we must mention once more the names of Fichte and Hegel, who may be taken as symbolic of the social philosophy of which we spoke. Before the seed here sown could produce its crop, naturally a considerable time had to pass. Their doctrines could spread only slowly, and above all there had first to be a serious reduction of the capital of the Christian and humanist tradition in Germany. Thus we can understand that it was only in the period from 1830 to 1850 that there came a manifest change that may be noted everywhere in the German mentality.<sup>4</sup> Realism, materialism, and the new faith in strength and power increasingly supplanted the Christian and humanist conceptions that had been dominant even in Hegel, and produced a spirit that in its beginning—as yet relatively mild—was plainly evident in certain individuals.<sup>5</sup> Without this new spirit neither List nor Marx can be understood. Indeed, even so dis-

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Albert Lange, in his famous *Geschichte des Materialismus* (1866), regards the year 1830 as the turning point. About that time (*Revue des deux mondes*, 1831) the French philosopher Edgar Quinet wrote: "What we now see in Germany is the ruin of the intelligence... that impotence of consciences, that moral void, that decadence of the true intelligence in Europe." It should be remembered, too, how at that time the representatives of "Young Germany" revolted against the dead Goethe and his humanity (Heine, W. Menzel, Börne, and others). Similarly, Jakob Burckhardt remarked that after 1830 the world was becoming more and more vulgar. Cf. K. Löwith, *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche*, Zurich, 1941.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. my book *Die Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart* (4th ed., Erlenbach-Zurich, 1943, p. 93), where I have dealt at length with the figure of Friedrich List from the point of view of "historic interference."

tinguished a writer as the historian Leopold von Ranke, with his unemotionality, his treatment of states as "individualities" following their own laws, his doctrine—poison for the Germans—of the "primacy of foreign policy," and his unfortunate coquetting with the idea of the power of nations, stood clearly at this turning point from better to worse,<sup>6</sup> especially after he had entered the service of the Prussian state. After this it is no longer surprising to find such a man as the historian Dahlmann, one of the "Seven of Göttingen,"<sup>7</sup> declaring in the Frankfurt Assembly in St. Paul's Church in 1849: "The path of power is the only one that will satisfy the ebullient urge to freedom—for it is not only of freedom that the German is thinking, it is mainly for the power he has hitherto failed to secure that he lusts."

Let us make this process clear to ourselves in another way. When the Germans were abruptly torn out of the world of the eighteenth century by the French Revolution and by Napoleon, they learned from these events two main things—on the one hand the impulse to freedom, and on the other hand patriotism in the new sense of devotion to the "nation," together with conscription, the will to use force in self-defense, and the determination to pay back rogues in their own coin. As regards this last it should never be forgotten that scarcely any other country in Europe was worse treated by Napoleon than was Prussia. Thus it was precisely the progressive groups that arrived at a mixture of liberalism and nationalism in which sometimes the one and sometimes the other predominated. In addition to this the intellectual influences that we have analyzed impregnated influential groups in all the German territories with the will to union and to a German state that should be

<sup>6</sup> Werner Kaegi, "*Geschichtswissenschaft und Staat in der Zeit Rankes*," *Schweizer Beiträge zur Allgemeinen Geschichte*, Vol. I, p. 168 ff.; Fr. Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert*, Vol. III, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1934, p. 94 ff.

<sup>7</sup> The *Göttinger Sieben*—the seven professors of the University of Göttingen (the brothers Grimm, Niebuhr, Dahlmann, and others) who were deprived of their chairs and expelled from Hanover in 1837 because they had refused to accept the high-handed abrogation of the Constitution by the new king, Ernest Augustus, Queen Victoria's "wicked uncle."

free but also strong and united. Thus in these groups, which were by no means confined to Prussia, and, indeed, were rejected by the leading Prussians as "democratic," the ideals of freedom and of the national state united, without it being possible to say whether the one or the other was the stronger. It was sincerely believed that the two ideals went together perfectly, indeed presupposed each other. How, then, did it happen that these liberal Germans, when in the revolution of 1848 their dream of unity in liberty dissolved into nothingness, proved ready to sacrifice liberty for unity, and so turned into the inglorious type that at the end of the century was called National Liberal? So far as intellectual influences have to be held responsible for this development, we have already given the answer. But other causes also played an important part. Even those who have no love for the materialist conception of history will have to agree in this case of the nineteenth century, the truly economic century, that economic motives bulked largely though not decisively in that development of the German middle class (to which we must certainly add for that period the working class). And it was just here that one more complication was reached in the destiny of Germany.

Now that the German middle class was aware of and beginning to make use of its economic powers, what was it bound to want most urgently of all? Undoubtedly the thing it most lacked—economic freedom, and, above all, liberation from the system of internal customs barriers that was becoming more and more intolerable, threatening, in view of Germany's political fragmentation, to cripple all industrial and commercial progress. It was entirely natural that in this situation men should envisage larger political units, and look contemptuously upon the petty state with its customs exactions, that they should see a virtue in the simple extensiveness of a state's territory, and should long for a Germany made into one great customs area by the throwing down of all internal barriers. This current of opinion most profited Prussia, as, after Austria, the most extensive of the German states; and it was reinforced by *Prussian economic policy*.

This is the place at which we must emphasize that in those first decades of the nineteenth century a part of the Prussian administration, influenced by the ideas of humanity and of liberalism, did not correspond in the least to the conceptions that, with good reason, we have generally associated with Prussia. We need only mention, in addition to the reforms of Stein and Hardenberg, the names of the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt, and add that the foundation at that time of Berlin University (1810), following the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt, provided what has justly been regarded to this day as an exemplar for all universities of the German language. The Prussian school system, based on the ideas of Pestalozzi, also deserves honorable mention here.

To this ministerial bureaucracy, which is one of Prussia's true titles to fame and whose last representatives (e.g., Rudolph von Delbrück) date back to Bismarck's early days, belonged the men under whom, in 1818, Prussia introduced the famous customs tariff that, as one of virtual free trade, aroused the admiration of all Europe. As it was the first of its sort, we may fairly say that the era of international economic liberalism was introduced not by England in 1846 but by Prussia in 1818. Those Prussian officials were eager followers of Adam Smith, and it was in Prussia that his free-trade program was first carried into practice. That country set an example that was eagerly studied in England and brought great strength to the English free-trade movement.

This Prussia epoch, which lasted from the customs tariff of 1818 until Bismarck's tariff of 1879, is that in which, through the Zollverein, Prussia became the leader along the path of economic liberation. Inevitably, this role made her for wide circles of the middle and working classes the symbol of economic progress, and won moral victories for her—under the aegis of Adam Smith!—in quarters that were anything but Prussophile.

If now we add to this the intellectual influences considered above, we shall have assembled the principal elements that produced the type of German liberal who, if not enthusiastic for

Prussia, was at least ready for compromise with her. It is that type of liberal who united liberty and unity, even under Prussian leadership—united liberalism, nationalism, and even chauvinism with one another; that type of liberal who was ready to go to Berlin if only his railways were built and his dream of a Germany united, no matter how, was fulfilled. We see figures like Karl Mathy (whose story was convincingly told in a biography by Gustav Freytag), Hansemann, Harkort, and Friedrich List, and, on the highest plane, men like Ranke, Droysen, Dahlmann, Theodor Mommsen, and Gustav Freytag, who were followed later by such men as Max Weber, Friedrich Naumann, and Naumann's followers the German *Nationalsozialen*. Some of them were men of the very best type, who then suddenly, when we probe to the bottom of their democratic and liberal convictions, so often prove a bitter disappointment, men who for all their culture seem to have had a bad conscience in clinging so to the old-fashioned and rather ridiculous idea of liberty, and who felt that they must find an excuse for it as the means of attaining national power and international status.

We must not overestimate the economic factor. But certainly this more attractive Prussia not only of the Humboldts, of the *Biedermeier* style, and of Berlin romanticism, but also of the Zollverein, the Delbrücks, and the railways, contributed substantially to reconciling the non-Prussian to the idea of making a trial, as a *pis-aller*, of a union under Prussian command, and of regarding Prussia as an agent of power and progress and—the thing that mattered in those days—of “evolution”; especially as Austria was then passing through the most reactionary phase of her history. Hence the offer of the imperial crown to Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who in his romantic and un-Prussian way so well suited that Prussian epoch; and hence the evident turning away from “particularism,” that is to say from a rejection of Prussia that was supposed to have become out of date. Hence, probably, also the speed with which eminent men in Hanover reconciled themselves to the annexation of 1866, among them Rudolf von Bennigsen, later the leader of the National Liberals—though it must be pointed out with no less

emphasis that Windthorst, Bismarck's great parliamentary opponent, was also a Hanoverian. We certainly must not forget that at the University of Göttingen in 1837 seven professors jeopardized their positions and their homes in order to bear witness to the right against an evil despot; but where were the other professors of Göttingen? Did they not behave as wretchedly to the dismissed professors as so many of our former colleagues did to us in 1933 when at Hitler's instance we were dismissed for loyalty to our convictions? And how would the Seven of Göttingen themselves have behaved in 1866?

It was just the working of fate that this lucid interval of Prussia from 1818 to 1879 had contributed so largely to making Germany ready to accept Prussian hegemony. The one and only time when Prussia had shown such attractive qualities turned out to be Germany's undoing. It had served only to make Bismarck's success more certain; and his success ended that Prussia and began a new epoch in which the country returned to the bad old tradition. As we have just been speaking mainly of economic policy, we may point out that our statement is applicable just as much to this, since after the Bismarckian tariff of 1879 Prussia resumed Friedrich II's policy of mercantilism, autarchism, and state intervention in industry. After Germany had been won by force and fraud and seduction for Greater Prussia, Bismarck was able to go on his way undisturbed, and in economic policy also, as we shall see, this was a course that contributed extraordinarily to the Prussification of Germany, though it was the direct opposite of the former liberal course.

#### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GERMAN INTO THE BISMARCKIAN EMPIRE

The similarity between Germany's conquest by Prussia and her later conquest by National Socialism leaps to the eye. In the years before the Third Reich Germany's power of resistance had been greatly weakened, but effective mastery over her nevertheless required Hitler's "blood and iron" policy, a coup d'état, the Reichstag fire, the terror, and an infernal system of propaganda. We must keep this latest experience in mind if we are fully to

understand the overwhelming of Germany by Bismarck's Prussia. It is true, as we saw, that Germany had developed in a way that had increasingly weakened her resistance to Prussian hegemony and was bound greatly to facilitate Bismarck's policy. But Germany and Prussia were still so wide apart that Prussia's hegemony had to be imposed on the Germans by force and fraud. For such a policy Germany was least of all prepared. As in 1933, the last critical stage of the conquest of power had to be achieved against the will of the conquered with "blood and iron," and, as we will add once more, also with craft and lying.

All we have said about Germany's internal development in no way alters the fact that until the Bismarckian empire we were still in the old and true Germany, a Germany to which in spite of everything one cannot refuse sympathy, and which would certainly have become a healthy and useful member of the European family of nations had not an evil genius appeared on the scene, as a hundred years earlier in the person of Friedrich II and a hundred years later in that of Hitler.

In order to give as vivid an impression as possible of this old Germany, we will choose two voices only out of countless others. Both are taken from the year of the abortive revolution of 1848. In that year the liberal Prussian Alexander von Humboldt wrote:

"So far as specially concerns Germany, she appears, with her many centers of culture and her lack of a political capital, to be penetrated the most thoroughly among the Germanic nations by the anti-Roman principles of decentralization, wherein she is related to ancient Greece and modern Italy. The problem she has to solve is manifest—to fuse the two elements of culture and policy, without injuring either, instead of neglecting policy as hitherto to strive only after general culture."<sup>8</sup>

After this liberal Prussian we shall let a non-Prussian speak, and we choose a pronouncement that comes to us from the solid middle class. We take one of the revolutionary newspapers of 1848—the *Allgemeine Hannoversche Zeitung* (Nienburg an

<sup>8</sup> *Briefwechsel und Gespräche Alexander von Humboldts mit einem jungen Freunde*, Berlin, 1861, p. 10.



der Weser) of May 10, 1848—and here, in an article on “*Die rechte Freiheit und das freie Recht*,” which in view of its content and its admirable form would deserve to be quoted in full, we find these passages:

What, then, is the just freedom? That is the just freedom which rests on the eternal pillars “Law and Order,” which is in alliance with virtue, with justice, and with truth, which sacrifices nothing to ambition and avarice, and which respects the eternal values more than the perishable ones. May such, above all, be our political freedom. May such be also our religious freedom. May such, finally, be scientific freedom. If in this way the banner of the just freedom waves in front of us, then the victory of the free justice will have been achieved, of the free justice that recognizes no difference of status, of faith, of knowledge. Between justice and freedom there is an eternal alliance, which no one may infringe unpunished. Pernicious is the policy that for the sake of profit undermines freedom, whether it may egoistically serve the interest of the mighty, or be benevolently concerned for the welfare of peoples. Equally pernicious, however, is the policy that despises justice, even though it imagines that it finds its support in the will of the peoples. Only continual attention to this alliance between justice and freedom preserves us from the errors of Macchiavellianism as well as from those of communism; it preserves us from the tutelage of the police systems of governments as well as from the tyranny of tumultuous popular assemblies; from the arrogance of obsolete learning as well as from the foolhardiness of immature theories.

This is political wisdom that certainly would not have been unworthy of a Burke, wisdom that to this day we may take to heart—and long ago it was formulated in a tiny German townlet.

It would be cruel to make comparisons between the new Germany, Greater Prussia, and that old Germany, which right up to the beginning of Bismarck’s triumphs had stood firm against all attacks. How robust the old Germany was, we may see from the fact that it took a considerable time after the foundation of the Bismarckian empire for the older Germany to overcome its distaste, its doubts, and its discomfort. It required the overwhelming victory over France to change the antipathy that was very widely felt against Bismarck, if not into liking, at least

into admiration, and the first years of the empire still produced many witnesses to the anxiety with which the best of the nation were filled in spite of the stupendous military successes. Even a man like Gustav Freytag, who had done so much to make the new regime popular, thought at first that he saw cracks in the edifice of the empire that were warnings of early collapse, and even in 1881 he declared that Germany would have to suffer a long time from the fact that for fifteen years the political strength of the nation had been personified in one man.

After the great *Gründerkrise* (promotion crisis) of 1873, and in view of all the rottenness it had revealed, dissatisfaction took very drastic forms in some cases. One of the noble thinkers of the old Germany, Wilhelm Raabe, wrote in his novel *Christoph Pechlin*:

The heroes' wounds had not yet healed, the tears of children and mothers, of wives and sweethearts and sisters had not yet dried, the grass had not grown on the graves of the fallen—but already, so soon after the dreadful war and the difficult victory, all was going very strangely in Germany. Just as after a great fire a cask of sirup bursts in a street and the mob and the youngsters start licking it up; so the moneybag had broken open, and the thalers rolled in the gutters, and only too many hands reached after them. It almost seemed as if this was the greatest gain the united fatherland could rake up from its great achievement in world history!

And he closed his remarks with the well-known passage: "It has always been a privilege of decent people in disturbed times to keep to themselves, rather than prudently shout with the crowd as rogues among rogues."

The same feeling is expressed in Spielhagen's novel with the characteristic title *Was will das werden?* ("What Is to Come of It?") (1886). Spielhagen later, in 1895, expressed a very harsh but justified judgment on Bismarck. Among other things he declared that the men of that time had failed in very many important respects to come up to the ideal he had formed of the German people. Instead of asking how anybody stood with regard to Bismarck, it must be asked how he stood in relation to Christ, that is to say to the gospel of the brotherhood of man.

He believed, he said, in that gospel with all his heart, and he also believed that those who did not recognize it would sooner or later be delivered up to destruction.

A new generation had to take the place of the old, and much else had to happen in Germany, before these last scruples were entirely overcome and the old Black-Red-Gold standard of liberal humanitarianism was supplanted by the Black-White-Red of Greater Prussian realism and nationalism. But how was it that this German transformation, this Prussianization of Germany, could take place?

To make this process fully intelligible, we should have to write the intellectual history of a whole period, and to show how the German transformation proves to be a part of the great transformation of the West. It would be necessary to describe at length the using up of the cultural heritage of the past, to write at length of positivism, materialism, the dissolution of values and standards, of scientism, relativism, utilitarianism, and much else. But we must limit ourselves—as we can do with a good conscience, since we have treated of these things elsewhere<sup>9</sup>—and we shall therefore simply mention a few points characteristic of the German evolution.

We have to remember to begin with that the influence of an outstanding personality on a people may be of critical importance for a long time. In point of fact, Bismarck so impressed his stamp on the German and his mental make-up that it is extraordinarily difficult to efface its traces. The German with whom we have had to do since Bismarck can, indeed, be described as the "*Bismarckian German*."

It was incomprehensible and unpardonable that people should have been led astray by that historic crook Adolf Hitler, who under other circumstances would have become simply a workshy common criminal, perhaps a matrimonial swindler, or would have traveled from fair to fair with a glib tongue and a case

<sup>9</sup> W. Röpke, *Die Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart* and *Civitas humana*. Cf. E. R. Curtius, *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*, Stuttgart, 1932, p. 86 ff., which also draws attention to the tragic fact of the immense part played by Jewish writers (beginning with Marx) in a development whose ultimate consequences produced so appalling a catastrophe for Jewry.

of anatomical curiosities. It is comprehensible and pardonable to succumb to the spell of a Friedrich II or a Napoleon. It is not entirely incomprehensible and not entirely unpardonable that Bismarck's contemporaries should have found it difficult to keep free from the influence of his personality. It was Germany's misfortune that he was a Mephistopheles of parts with charm and genuine power, who in lucid moments even had the rare gift of moderation; and to this day it is not easy for us to persuade ourselves that in spite of everything he was a Mephistopheles. On top of this, there were very talented writers and orators in his service to win over the German people to his personality and his achievements and to bring them into an almost messianic frame of mind. A Frenchman who has to be reckoned with very seriously has said, and he may have been right, that Bismarck's policy would have been impossible without men like Sybel and Freytag—and, we may add, Treitschke.<sup>10</sup>

We have also to bear in mind that while more and more non-Prussians modeled themselves on Prussian ideas, they had fallen victim to the fascination exercised always and everywhere, and quite especially in that age of materialism, by success and competence. There were, indeed, not a few foreigners who for the same reason became admirers of Bismarck and of the new empire, to say nothing of the many Austrians who were not deterred from their cult of Bismarck either by the old memory of Friedrich's attack on Maria Theresa or by the new one at Königrätz or by the obligations implicit in the high level of Austrian civilization. The worst product of that pernicious seduction was later to be the Austrian Hitler.

In addition to this, these influences established themselves on the basis of a true *revolution in the structure of German society*, a revolution that in the course of the nineteenth century was carried further in Germany than in any other country. It has not been unjustly remarked that in the half century after the revolution of 1848 social conditions and the mental and moral foundations in Germany changed more than in the preceding

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Denis, *La fondation de l'empire Allemand*, Paris, 1906, p. 133.

ten centuries;<sup>11</sup> and the reason is to be sought primarily in the rapid industrialization and commercialization and in the accompanying *urbanization*, proletarianization, and mass formation.<sup>12</sup>

I have written at length concerning these morbid sociological processes, common to all countries, in my works *The Social Crisis of Our Time* and *Civitas humana*. The long and short of the story is that to a greater or lesser degree all countries of the civilized world have been affected by this process of sociological and moral disintegration, the degree depending on the reserves of sanity every single nation is still able to rally. Totalitarianism is the ultimate result in which the destructive effects of that process culminate once the reserves prove too weak. In this breakdown of civilization called totalitarianism we are touching the rock bottom of the development started during the nineteenth century after the counterbalancing forces had been used up; it is the acme of mass society. What is really happening to society might be compared to the "Dust Bowl" in the American Middle West, which, having been caused by reckless exploitation of the soil reserves, by the "rape of the earth" and greedy commercialism, has become a horrible symbol of our modern society; the social "humus" has been destroyed by erosion and the complex structure of society, like the soil in the Dust Bowl, has been ground to dust; society has been turned into an amorphous heap of sand grains that, under the storms of mass hysteria, may be whirled up sky-high and bury everything beneath them. When we say, therefore, that a totalitarian country such as Germany is nothing but a social Dust Bowl we do more than use a picturesque metaphor. If we consider everything that these words implies we rather suggest an involved sociological analysis when we speak of "the German Dust Bowl."

After having understood the German catastrophe as the last phase of the process of social erosion and the depletion of moral and social reserves, we must turn back to German history, the constitution of German society, and the national character of

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>12</sup> Mass formation (*Vermassung*)—the development of a mass civilization; a sociological process by which the structure of society is dissolved into a mass of individuals whose coherence is merely mechanical or, at times, hysterical; the formation of mass society. See Röpke, *Civitas humana*.

the Germans in order to find out why Germany has been the principal victim of that process. We may mention first the suddenness with which she was wrested from her traditions; indeed, America offers the only examples of mushroom growth of towns and industries such as took place in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. Now, we mentioned earlier that the men and women who became proletarians in these towns and industrial districts had largely come from the Prussian regions in which the emancipation of the peasants had produced a rural proletariat. But after this, undoubtedly, the critical element in proletarianization and mass formation in Germany was an *increase in population* of remarkable pace and dimensions, an increase that, however, was unique in its effects because it took place in a nation that was already making a radical breach in the continuity of its political, mental and moral, and economic evolution. If, indeed, we ask ourselves where anything remained of the Germany of Goethe, the Humboldts, and the Grimms, or of the Germany that spoke to us just now from that small-town Hanoverian newspaper of 1848, one of the various answers is that Germany was inundated by countless millions of incomers who arrived too quickly and in too great number to be culturally assimilated.<sup>13</sup> *Germany became the victim of a barbarian invasion from within the nation's own womb.* In addition to this, finally, Prussia, by the leveling and centralizing effect of her administration, of universal military service, of education, and of the judicial system, contributed powerfully to the process of mass formation and of Prussification.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This view is expressed with some exaggeration but interestingly in Marcel Duthéil's *La population allemande, les variations du phénomène démographique, leur influence sur la civilisation occidentale*, Paris, 1937. This writer takes no account of the fact that the German increase in population, which, indeed, is entirely comparable with the British increase, produced the far-reaching effects he mentions only in association with other factors of which we have spoken.

<sup>14</sup> Even before the founding of the Empire, the Munich historian W. H. Riehl wrote in his book *Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (6th ed., Stuttgart, 1866, p. 163): "Prussia is the German power that for two centuries represented most definitely the modern fact of political centralization, and so, without wishing it or realizing it, paved the way for the social centralization which is now growing in so demonic a form." An early diagnosis of mass formation and a forecast of its political conse-

Finally, the Prussification of Germany was greatly furthered by the manner in which the evolution into a modern industrial state took place in Germany. We refer to the plain fact that what we may call German "capitalism" developed actually under Prussian leadership and under the dominance of Prussian economic conceptions. This German "capitalism" was not one of the Marxist pattern, but the historically unique and, we may fairly say, dismally distorted form in which the modern industrial system developed on German soil in a Greater Prussian empire—an environment that had been created by policy and not by any immutable economic law.<sup>15</sup> In other words, Berlin became really the center, because it was becoming increasingly the meeting point of the threads of an economic system under which the Germans were growing rich, powerful, and numerous. Not only was it natural that the new human type in trade and industry, versatile and more and more under materialistic influences, should quickly adjust itself to the dominant power, but the new gigantic superstructure of modern German industry was built up under an economic policy largely inspired and carried out by Prussia. And this economic policy, strongly interventionist, subventionist, and monopolistic, was so contrived that the business success of the individual depended more and more on whether or not he knew the right strings to pull in Berlin.

The actual deep dividing line came in 1879, when Germany passed from free trade to protection and Bismarck began, with cynical openness, to turn the whole of home politics into a struggle between "pressure groups" and to transform the old ideological parties into parties representing interests. It was the year in which the conditions were first created for the growth of cartels and syndicates, of the neo-German monopoly capitalism and the imperialism bound up with it. Thus that year

<sup>15</sup> Here as on many other points we find ourselves in agreement with Edmond Vermeil, *Germany's Three Reichs* (London, 1944), p. 220 ff. A really serviceable economic and social history of Germany in the nineteenth century, written with the perspectives of today, does not yet exist. Among the best available are still: Henri Lichtenberger, *L'Allemagne moderne*, Paris, 1907, and Henri Hauser, *Les méthodes allemandes d'expansion économique*, Paris, 1915.

became one of the pregnant years of modern history, in the economic sphere and far beyond it.<sup>16</sup>

Thanks to this neo-Prussian economic policy, and thanks also to the unexampled increase in population, there began now the colossal growth of industry, of transport, of the great towns, of the great stores, of the industrial districts; of the mass parties, of state care for mass welfare; of monopolies, trade union federations, and banks—and the old Germany began to disappear and to give place to a Greater Prussia drunk with success, while the influence of non-Prussian traditions and institutions grew weaker and weaker, desperately though some of them fought for existence. In this thoroughly materialistic period the temptation was almost irresistible to grow rich and participate in the so-called progress, giving up the traditional ways of thought for the new German smartness. That this was a selling of one's soul was scarcely noticed, much less felt to be any great objection.

The Prussian conception of economic life made its way, and now, in the new historic school,<sup>17</sup> there was introduced even the economic theory that, under Schmoller's despotic leadership (he was a Swabian as Hegel had been), went out from Berlin to monopolize the universities and to train the bureaucracy that at the beginning of the century had learned from Adam Smith. Even the peasants of western and southern Germany, so far as they did not remain loyal to their regional or religious organizations, joined the Bund der Landwirte (farmers' union) and, from a shortsighted view of their interests, accepted the leadership of the Prussian landowners.

This *Greater Prussian economic system* meant not only state intervention in industry, monopolies, subsidies, and political control of economic affairs, but also hierarchical organization

<sup>16</sup> This has been recognized with keen insight especially from the socialist side, for instance by R. Hilferding, *Das Finanzkapital*, Vienna, 1910, and Paul Lensch, *Drei Jahre Weltrevolution*, Berlin, 1917. Cf. also my own book, *German Commercial Policy*, London, 1934, p. 24 ff.

<sup>17</sup> That school in economics which depreciated economic theory in favor of mere description of the economic institutions and their historical development. Its head was Professor Schmoller, at the University of Berlin. Its teaching was that there were really no economic laws that a benevolent government had to respect in its economic and social policy.



modern political form it is essentially a specific product of German intellectual and social history.<sup>18</sup>

This explains not only why it was a German intellectual, Karl Marx, and a German manufacturer, Friedrich Engels, that founded modern socialism, but also why to this day Germans have always taken so prominent a part in the socialist movement in other countries. Many things have contributed to this—the intellectual effects of German philosophy; the pronounced proletarianization and mass formation in Germany; the profound belief of the German in discipline, organization, and authority; the sharp class distinction inherited from feudalism and absolutism, especially in Prussia; the great increase in population; the exclusion of intellectuals from participation in healthy public life; the provocative character of the Greater Prussian economic system; the lack of tradition in the new German realm; and Germany's leading position in the later intellectual currents of positivism, evolutionism, materialism, and historicism.<sup>19</sup> Finally, there was the circumstance that, for reasons peculiar to Germany, the social democracy of that country became the political refuge of people who originally were radical liberals and democrats and would have remained so in other countries, but in Germany, after the liberal parties had made their peace with the new Reich, had become politically homeless.<sup>20</sup> These recruits made the new socialist doctrine their economic program, without realizing in the slightest that it was incurably inconsistent with the liberal and democratic *political* program.

<sup>18</sup> At the very outset of the Bismarckian empire, such keen observers as E. Lavisse (*Revue des deux mondes*, September 15, 1873) and L. Bamberger (*Die Arbeiterfrage*, 1873) were in agreement on this point. Later on it was worked out very well by William Martin, *La crise politique de l'Allemagne contemporaine*, Paris, 1913.

<sup>19</sup> The general philosophy according to which the key to the understanding of any institution is to study its history and to relate it to its historical setting. There are famous books on it by E. Troeltsch and F. Meinecke. Cf. also Hayek, "Scientism and the Study of Society."

<sup>20</sup> The best example of this is no less a man than August Bebel himself (E. Eyck, *Bismarck*, Vol. II, Erlenbach-Zurich, 1943, p. 304). Cf. also F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, London, 1944, p. 124 ff.; W. Röpke, *Internationale Ordnung*, Erlenbach-Zurich, 1945, p. 12 ff.

The tragic thing was that very few of those who became socialists by way of protest against Greater Prussia had any inkling of the extent to which Prussianism was actually an element of socialism, when that doctrine was freed from its democratic-liberal husk, revealing as kernel the faith in organization, in the collectivity, in the all-powerful state. How far it is possible today to go along this road if the troublesome vestiges of liberalism are shuffled off is shown by the Social Democrats who became forerunners of Nazism, such as Paul Lensche, Johannes Plenge, or August Winnig, the former Marxist Sombart, and, equally with these, the Fascists, Nazis, and Communists of our day. In the stock on which all these are grafted are to be found not only Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte but also the Prussian kings, Hegel, Fichte, and all the rest of the creators of the Prussian spirit and the Prussian state; and that stock is the stock of modern socialism in all its variations.<sup>21</sup>

Thus we see that Germany in the form of Greater Prussia has endowed the world on top of all else with ideologies, conceptions, and institutions in which she appears to be triumphing over her conquerors, and this at a moment when she herself would perhaps like to turn away from them as the causes of her destruction. One needs, indeed, to have lived in Germany in order to scent today almost everywhere the neo-German aroma.

The great question of our time is whether it will allow its mental, political, economic, and social development to come under the influence of countries that have been pushed along this path solely by a unique pathology of their social history. These countries are Germany and Russia, both gigantic world craters that are dropping their lava on all countries. So far, however, as Germany is concerned, it should be clear that anyone who tried to solve the German problem with the recipe of the necessarily centralist collectivism would only be proceeding along the path that for three generations has been leading her people to destruction. It would mean trying to cure her with the poison that has been engendered in her thoroughly morbid

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 124 ff. With the same view and in particularly interesting perspective, J. Rivière, *L'Allemand*, Paris, 1918, pp. 232-3.

frame in the course of her history, the main stages of which we have here passed in survey.

#### THE FINAL STAGES

We have not to tell here the history of Germany from Bismarck to Hitler. Our task is to seek the underlying causes that explain its tragic ultimate course. We are not concerned, therefore, with Bismarck's personality, in many respects so fascinating, but only with the seed he sowed. No matter how great a man he may—like Napoleon—have been, the results of his work were fateful, as with Napoleon. Their full dimensions can be seen only today, and only a German can fully assess them. And what applies to Bismarck applies also to all other effective forces in recent German history.

It would also be entirely to misunderstand us if the absurd and ill-judged purpose were attributed to us of representing Germany as the only black sheep in a flock of exemplary European peoples. On the contrary, we must summon the courage to declare with the utmost emphasis, at the present moment when world opinion may be little inclined to accept the hard fact, that until 1914 Germany had no reason to be particularly ashamed of her record in comparison with other nations.

All peoples have reason in very truth to beat their breasts and to confess that they "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Every nation of today—especially every great power—has had at some time in the past a period of ruthless power policy; England in the age of colonial domination, of imperialism, of oppression of Ireland, and of jingoism; France under Richelieu, Louis XIV, and Napoleon; the United States at the time of Negro slavery and in the incessant wars against the Indians; Turkey under the Osmanli; Russia almost throughout her history—and even such exemplary countries as Holland and Sweden have to look back on the dark chapters of the early Netherlands colonial history and the Swedish great-power policy from Gustav Adolphus to Charles XII. None of the great nations came into existence through spontaneous generation or parthenogenesis, none by any other means than war and violence and

diplomatic intrigue. The very fact that until toward the end of the nineteenth century there was neither a centralized German state nor an Italy among the great powers proves that until then those two countries were in the main victims of European great-power politics. It would be an injustice to consider the last phases of the history of these two countries without reference to the earlier phases during which they were not hammer but anvil.

In order to see the problem of Germany in the right perspective we must also remember that even what National Socialism did is not, unfortunately, absolutely unique in history. There are other nations too that, at some time of their history, have been worshipers of nationalism, imperialism, and militarism, that have brought misery and destruction over their neighbors, that have flouted international law and committed fearful cruelties. True, Prussia has been the artificial creation of absolutist soldier-kings and has, to the point of cynicism, been cultivating the spirit of ruthless violence. But has Russia ever been anything else? And have not Danilevski and Dostoevski been almost hysterical champions of the philosophy of force, of brutality, and of antiliberal revolt against the West? True, the cruelties committed by the Nazis are colossal. But were not even in England about seventy thousand men put to death by Henry VIII without apparent damage to his historic repute? Who is still talking of the massacre of the millions of Armenians? Or of the millions of Russian peasants who have been cold-bloodedly "liquidated" by the Soviet regime? There is no denying the truth suggested by such and other questions. But even more important is the other truth that what Nazi Germany did, though perhaps not unique in kind, is most certainly unique in degree. Moreover, Germany has been the central country of the continent that once was the central one of the world, and it is largely Germany's responsibility that Europe lost this place. That is why everything the Germans do weighs so heavy in the scales of history, no matter what other nations may or may not have done. And because the Germans were the central nation of the central continent, they were also the center of universal atten-

tion. Their responsibility was enormous, and not even what might have been pardonable in the case of other countries was permitted to them. It seems that the Germans of former generations had an acute sense of this particular responsibility of the central nation of Europe, but since Bismarck this type has become rarer and rarer. It was not only the geographical position of their country that made the irresponsible Germans so dangerous, but also their very efficiency. Even if the Germans deserve most of the criticisms of their character, their politics, or their way of life, they might not be taken too seriously if in addition they were relatively harmless either by a peripheral situation of their country or by their lack of efficiency. Probably they would be as popular as Rumanians or Argentinians, just as they have been really popular in the past when they lived up to their responsibility—as popular as somewhat queer neighbors ever can be.

If we are to examine Germany's case with the relentless candor brought to bear in this book, let us follow the good maxim of the Gospel (Matt. 7: 5): "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." The best way to serve the common cause of all of us is for each nation ruthlessly to examine its own case. But, that done, it is not only our right, but, in the service of the truth and justice at which we have aimed, actually our duty to issue a warning against any sort of pharisaism on the part of other nations, and to permit no distortion of perspectives. As there is a danger today that few other people will venture to say it, let us say it ourselves: Neither do the Germans possess all the vices and the other peoples all the virtues, nor is it true that the Germans have been, not simply of late, but at all times, disturbers of the peace of an otherwise peaceful and respectable family of peoples. For centuries the relation between Germany and the other nations was much more the other way round. The Germans are hardly likely to forget the Thirty Years' War, in which their country was trampled down as the arena of the European powers, or the wars of conquest of Louis XIV and the devastation of the Palatinate, or Napo-

leon's invasion. In Friedrich II's cynical policy of conquest we see one of the most baneful events of German and of European history, but nobody can claim that it was something unique, and the admiration its author aroused all over Europe at the time does not suggest that it was then felt everywhere to be in any way unique. And we can only repeat here that the course pursued by the Germans for the past hundred years, first in theory and later in practice—the course we have criticized so unsparingly—cannot be understood without the profound effects that the French invasion at the beginning of the nineteenth century had on Germany.

Now that with these remarks we have brought the scales of justice into equilibrium, we may say all the more frankly that since Bismarck's time the Germans have pursued a fatally wrong course, and we can follow that course down to the black day in German history when the incompetent tinter of picture post-cards from Braunau am Inn, Adolf Hitler, became chancellor of the realm founded by Bismarck. We are now also entitled to say that the Germans cannot excuse themselves by claiming that in what they have done from Bismarck to Hitler they have really only followed the example set them by other peoples. The centralized unitary state, created for power politics, was the very thing that was utterly in conflict with the nature of Germany. It had therefore to be brought into existence with a violence corresponding to the strength of the resistance to it, a violence that made this Germany really a disturber of the peace of Europe, against which in the end the universal revulsion of peoples and the might of their governments ultimately united.

The Germans had every reason to ask themselves whether this growing feeling that was assembling all the world against them did not point to causes they must seek in themselves. They would have been able to find one of these causes in the fact that the Greater Prussian power policy, based on universal military service, which had enforced German unity, implied a real menace to Europe. Long before Bismarck, Prussia had been the first among the powers to take conscription seriously and unceasingly to add to her military strength. Then, when through military

predominance she had attained her aims in the wars of 1864 to 1870-71 and overwhelmed both the German confederation and France, she took, in the brutal annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, a step beyond all remedy.

Greater Prussia imagined that in these provinces she could recover what Louis XIV had taken, but she forgot that in the intervening two hundred years nations had become living units aware of their unity, and that it was no longer possible to tear a limb from them without leaving an incurable wound. She did not realize that her policy had become a provocative anachronism. What other powers had done in the past was now in truth no longer permissible to Germany—not only because it was in conflict with her nature and her situation, but also because it was opposed to the spirit of the time, a time that might with some justice have quoted Molière:

*Nous vivons sous un règne et sommes dans un temps,  
Où par la violence on fait mal ses affaires.*

In this the Bismarckian empire set an example that the other powers were compelled to follow, and the outcome was the "armed peace" out of the tensions of which came in the end the First World War. Germany had really been the pacemaker along the path of evil, not only because she had been the first to enter it, but also because she had become the predominant power on the Continent, and because her acts, her gestures, and her spirit were bound to give the impression that she fully intended to make relentless use of her strength.

In those gestures and in that spirit of the new empire the Germans might, indeed, have been able to find another cause for the ever increasing unity of the world's judgment upon their country. It would lead us too far afield to mention here the many gestures that were bound to startle the world, and to make clear what was inevitably read into the speeches of Wilhelm II and the German attitude at the Hague peace conference, to mention these two features alone. Almost of more importance was the spirit that spoke in these gestures and had become more and more the spirit of the Prussianized German himself, so

much so that we have to see in Wilhelm II not so much a *leader* of Germany, like Bismarck, as her *representative*.

We know already what spirit this was. It was the spirit of a nationalism in which justified pride in the nation's achievements was mixed with an almost morbid conceit, a spirit to which Friedrich II, Potsdam, and Bismarck seemed the most genuine symbols of German greatness, and which glorified Macchiavelianism in the guise of the Realpolitik by which such store was set. Under the influence of this spirit more and more Germans came to regard the Bismarckian realm as the true fulfillment of the old mystical dream of empire symbolized by the saga of the sleeping Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser, and to regard it as the embodiment of power and fame, without troubling any more about its artificial construction or the doubtful morality of its origin. When later, as we saw, so many of the German intellectuals took up a most unheroic attitude toward National Socialism (at all events in its beginnings), with fateful consequences, this attitude was certainly determined by the nationalist and militarist program of the Third Reich and the exceedingly clever propaganda with which it appealed to the "Fridericus-Potsdam-Realpolitik" complex of those elements. The repulsive farce with which the newly elected Reichstag was opened in March 1933 in the garrison church at Potsdam was calculated with an uncanny sureness of aim to enroll that spirit of Greater Prussia in the service of the Third Reich. It was an unsurpassable symbol of the alliance entered into by Nazism with the Bismarckian empire, its traditions, and its leading groups, an alliance that formed the bridge by which it attained power.

It could not but be plain to anyone who was not blinded by Germany's astonishing material progress under Bismarck and Wilhelm II that that spirit was a heinous aberration and a betrayal not only of the eternal values of our civilization but also of the best German traditions, which had retained their vitality far into the Bismarckian period. How long these traditions had survived may be shown by a small instance. At Christmas 1917 the University of Göttingen sent to its students in the field a collection of sayings of the greatest scholars of its famous his-



tory, entitled *Voices from Two Hundred Years of the Georgia Augusta University* (*Stimmen aus zwei Jahrhunderten der Georgia Augusta*). As an introduction to the collection there was an anonymous French poem on Albrecht von Haller, famed because—

*D'écouter la nature il fit sa loi suprême;  
Il soumit le savoir à cette autorité;  
Il sut chez l'ennemi chérir la vérité  
Et haïr l'erreur chez lui-même—*

"He made it his supreme law to listen to nature; he submitted knowledge to that authority; he knew how to cherish truth in the enemy, and to hate error in himself." These last stirrings of a noble German soul did nothing, indeed, to disprove the general trend of the time, but only show the opportunities that had been thrown away. For more than fifty years men had had to wait with growing impatience for a true "German awakening." The longer such hopes were disappointed, the more certain it became that Germany was heading for a catastrophe. When the catastrophe came, in August 1914, it dragged down Germany and Europe into the abyss.

After Germany's defeat and the collapse of her political system in November 1918, it seemed for a while as if the neo-German spirit had at last received the *coup de grâce* it needed and had given place to the "repentance and rebirth" for which the philosopher Max Scheler called at the time. When we now recall that period, we feel that there were then precious and irrevocable months in which all was ready for such a conversion of the Germans. It would lead us too far afield to explain at length why that opportunity was missed. The essential reason was that both in Germany and in the victor states there were but few farseeing men familiar with the German problem who realized that necessity for accompanying Germany's moral revolution with a political and an economic and social one. It was not enough just to transfer the National Assembly to Weimar in order to substitute the spirit of that classic spot for the "spirit of Potsdam," and all the fine phrases of the Weimar constitu-

tion were doomed to remain mere words so long as two other things that would attack the root of the German problem remained undone. These two indispensable conditions were a *political* and an *economic and social* revolution, with the common purpose of making an end of the Greater Prussian Reich and of the forces that were its support, and of putting in its place a new Germany liberated from the hegemony of Prussia and from the pernicious influence of the Prussian Junkers and the heavy industries. The *political* revolution would have consisted in the thrusting of Prussia back to the Elbe and the restoration of a true federation of the autonomous states, Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse, the Rhineland, Westphalia, Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia, and Saxony, that is to say in the creation of a German confederation such as would have developed after 1866 but for Prussia's policy of force. The *economic and social* revolution would have had two purposes. One would have been to carry out in the Prussian territories a radical agrarian reform breaking up the great estates and putting peasant farms in their place. The other purpose would have been to end the economic and political dominance of the heavy industries, and this would have been done best and most securely by abolishing the customs duties on iron and steel, which would have resulted in the collapse of the cartels in the heavy industries and the reduction of the latter to economically sound dimensions.

Why nothing of the sort happened, why instead, after a few months of anxiety, Prussia, the Junkers, and the heavy industries emerged actually strengthened from the general collapse, is incomprehensible. This was the beginning of all the evils that followed. It was the neglect of these steps that ultimately wrecked the Weimar Republic and produced the Third Reich. The Prussian Junkers had managed to emerge unscathed from Prussia's defeat in 1806, and had even made use of the agrarian reform of Stein and Hardenberg to strengthen their own position and largely to eliminate the independent peasantry; and similarly after the defeat in 1918—which once more had been a defeat of their own policy—they succeeded in maintaining and

further strengthening their privileged position. Meanwhile they had found apt pupils in the heavy industries.

As for the political revolution, it went no further than a few well-meant but ineffective articles of the new constitution. In actual fact the centralization of Germany, directed from Berlin, was not loosened but intensified in a way of which neither Bismarck nor Wilhelm II had dared to dream. The Hohenzollerns went, but the Prussian officers and government officials remained, and the socialist ministers of Prussia defended the hegemony of their country with all the stubbornness of their predecessors. Such movements for independence as were actively promoted in Hanover and in the Rhineland were proscribed and suppressed by every available means. To dethrone the German monarchs and establish a German republic on the basis of modern mass democracy with the newest devices of proportional representation, parliamentary government, one-chamber system, and what not, all that seemed a guarantee of progress and democracy while in reality it destroyed the federal structure of Germany and created the political framework that alone made Hitler possible.

Only now, thanks to centralization in finance, in transport, in military administration, and in many other fields, did Germany become a real unitary state, and owing to an incomprehensible confusion of mind it was in the very circles that called themselves progressive that the greatest satisfaction was felt. To complete this confusion, the Bavarians, in their struggle against the centralist unitary state and the hegemony of Prussia, a struggle serving an entirely sound end, temporarily turned their sympathies to circles in which they saw allies because those circles were opposing the progressives with a reactionary Prussianism of the worst sort. It was a true tragedy of errors that in Munich, thanks to encouragement from these reactionary circles, Nazism was able to strike its first roots—Nazism, the revolutionary movement that was later to carry Prussianism and centralism to extreme lengths. Thus Munich, whose political climate is utterly opposed to Nazi totalitarianism and collectivism, had to bear after that tragic mistake the disgrace of

being described by the Nazis as "capital of the movement," until, through the bloody suppression in 1943 of the revolt of its university against Nazism, this city earned the name of "capital of the countermovement."

If we seek to establish the responsibility for these incomprehensible errors and omissions, through which, after the collapse of 1918, the moral, political, and economic-social revolution was frustrated and turned into its very opposite, we shall be unable to avoid casting severe blame on the parties then dominant, and first of all on the Social Democratic party, which was in no way mentally prepared for the task suddenly thrust upon it. The idea of the political revolution as we have defined it was naturally remote from the Social Democrats' centralistic thinking, but even for the economic revolution they had as a whole no understanding. Influential Social Democratic leaders opposed the transformation of the great estates in Prussia into peasant holdings, because under the Marxist program they regarded this as a "retrograde step." Finally, there emerged from the ranks of the Social Democrats men who, like Baade, the Reich grain commissioner (who in the past had belonged to the extreme left), drove to the highest pitch the traditional Prussian policy of a protective tariff on grain for the benefit of the great landowners, and so actually shielded the Prussian Junkers from the impact of the international economic crisis.

The cabinets dominated by the Social Democrats in the first critical months and years of the Republic completely failed also in the other aim of breaking the economic and political power of the heavy industries. The Marxist program forbade them to adopt the very effective liberal expedient of abolishing the customs duties on iron and steel, and on the other hand they were justifiably unable to decide on complete nationalization of the heavy industries; thus they went no further than a few half measures, which very soon proved to be mere façades behind which the industrialists were able to develop their strong position all the more undisturbed. The responsibility of the Social Democrats for all these errors and omissions was shared by the other leading parties, the Center and the Democratic, and by a

large part of the officials of the ministries, whose influence had only grown stronger. The beneficiaries were the classes who represented the tradition of the Bismarckian empire, and the parties that defended their views and interests.

As if it were not enough that the needed political and economic-social revolution had not come, and not enough, further, that the elements that these two revolutions should have broken had actually been strengthened, the governments of the Weimar Republic, in their weakness and perplexity, now permitted the further frightful misfortune of *inflation*. This it was in reality that so radically plowed up Germany that the seed of National Socialism could thrive. One needs to have been living in Berlin at the time, and to have studied the German financial and currency policy at close quarters, to realize how helplessly the responsible authorities faced the deluge of notes. Meanwhile the middle class lost everything and was driven into the arms of the nationalist parties, while immense wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of inflation profiteers of the stamp of Hugo Stinnes.

But this very inflation is a reminder to us that it would be unjust to remember the errors of the Germans and forget those of the victors. These, too, were immense and today incomprehensible; as they were the errors of the actual arbiters of Germany's destiny, and were made by men who were not suffering like the Germans from the perplexities of defeat and collapse, they were, indeed, the more unpardonable. We must assume today that the victors had no clear conception of the actual nature of the German problem, still less of its solution. They showed virtually no interest in a true political and socio-economic revolution in Germany; by the fluctuations of their reparations policy they made it difficult to pursue a reasonable financial and currency policy in Germany; they failed to offer any sort of encouragement to the new democratic government—and then they wondered why there was no moral revolution. There now developed the vicious circle of a harsh policy on the part of the victors and a continual stiffening of German public opinion. When the path of reconciliation was then entered under Stresemann, it

was too late. The old Prussian spirit had been strengthened, and all the belated concessions now made served only to encourage it. Many drew the despairing inference that the Germans were incurable, instead of asking themselves where they themselves had gone wrong. There is a great danger that the consequences of the errors and omissions of that time may lead to their repetition today.

We now understand why there was no moral revolution in Germany after 1918. The poison of nationalism was not got rid of, but under the influence of defeat, collapse, and economic and social upheavals, was only propagated further. The very serious readiness for a searching self-examination that existed after November 1918 was quickly dissipated and reduced to impotence in face of the opposite determination to return all the more defiantly to the old spirit. Truth-defying claims like the legend of "the stab in the back" and the theory of the "war guilt lie," rejecting all German responsibility for the war, soon began to have such influence on the ideas of the Germans that the nationalist parties and later National Socialism had an easy game. Very soon it was impossible for any German historian to venture any longer to express disapproval even of the unnecessary harshness of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, the infringement of Belgian neutrality, or the vandal destruction perpetrated by the Germans during their retreats in France. We may even suspect that none of those scholars any longer dreamed of such criticism. Thus there formed between the German historians and their foreign colleagues a barrier across which a few polite words might be shouted now and then, but no agreement was any longer possible about the crucial questions of contemporary history. While almost all other nations began to consider their power policy of the past with critical objectivity, German history became more and more a mythology, and the questioning of its sanctified traditions was godless blasphemy.

To those whose outlook is influenced by the materialist conception of history, it is natural to regard the economic and social upheavals in Germany, and in particular the great crisis of 1929-33 with its mass unemployment, as the decisive causes

of the rise of National Socialism. This doctrine is as one-sided as it is dangerous. Undoubtedly the inflation and the economic crisis played an important part in making the Germans susceptible to the bacillus of Nazism, but what was of critical importance was their mental and moral outlook. When the trade depression of 1929 reached Germany, the consequences were no more formidable than in other industrial countries, and certainly no more so than in the United States. Only when the unforgettable Reichstag elections of September 1930 suddenly made the Nazis one of the strongest parties, and, together with the simultaneous swelling of the Communist vote, revealed the pressing danger of the extremest radicalism and nihilism, only when these two parties, the Nazis and the Communists, crippled the political machinery of the Reich and menaced the ultimate foundations of state and of society and of world trade—only then did the storm of the crisis become a hurricane. Confidence was now utterly wrecked, and so everything became precarious—enterprise, foreign credits, the German currency, and the sensitive mechanism of the German credit system. Only then did the economic situation become really desperate, following the radicalization of the masses that had shaken the foundations of ordered economic life.

Thus we may fairly say that it was largely Nazism itself that so exacerbated the German economic crisis that it was easy for the Nazis to handle the victims of their hysteria, the unemployed, the uprooted intellectuals, the debt-ridden farmers, and that they also won over the hesitant when later, by the high-handed means of their rearmament policy—called the “full employment” policy—they made an end of unemployment. But that hysteria was the consequence of a malady of the German soul, the long antecedents of which we have here sketched.





PART III

THE SOLUTION

The enemy who has merely been overthrown can rise again, but the enemy reconciled is truly overcome.

SCHILLER, *Ueber Anmut und Würde*

When civilized men fight cannibals they do not eat them.

G. K. CHESTERTON



## WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE

**I**N its first edition, which appeared in Switzerland in spring 1945, the present book concluded with a chapter where the solution of the German question was sketched on the same lines that the author had recommended to the Allies during the war. Now, after two years of Allied policy in Germany, he has to proceed differently. First, the outline of what appeared in 1945 as the solution of the German question will be given, without essential changes of the original text. Then, in a second chapter, we shall examine what has been actually done, while in a last chapter we shall consider what can and must be done now.

### THE THREEFOLD REVOLUTION

We have treated of the nature of the German question to the best of our knowledge, in all conscientiousness, and at such length as the scale of this book permits. Now we have reached the point at which we may say how this question is to be solved, after the collapse of the whole political, economic, social, and mental and moral structure of Germany in a catastrophe such as world history can seldom have seen. We can be brief, as the solution follows naturally from our inquiry. We need only indicate its main lines, without giving reasons and without entering into details. The reasons have been supplied by the whole of this book, and as for the details, they can easily be furnished when the time is ripe. We must issue a warning against repeating the mistake of 1919 and drafting a brand-new constitution for the Reich without first giving deep consideration

to the question of the political, economic, and moral foundations on which it must be based in order to fulfill its paper promises.

We shall say at once that this is the world-historic hour in which the German question can truly and finally be settled to the satisfaction of Germany and Europe, if the insight and the energy can be summoned up to make use of the brief interval during which everything is in flux. Anything that is omitted in the months to come will remain, we fear, beyond reach for generations.

As after the First World War, the solution consists of a three-fold revolution, in the moral, the political, and the economic and social field. For each of these three revolutions the time is now ripe as it has not been for generations.

We begin with the *moral revolution*, on which all else depends; the German question has at all times been essentially a mental and moral one. There is no hope for the Germans, no salvation for their civilization, and no prospect of any restoration of their position in the world if they do not genuinely and unreservedly take account of the hard reality—of the measure and the causes of their disaster, of the fatal mistakes they have made, of the unspeakable crimes that have been committed in their name and by their fellow countrymen inside and outside Germany, and of the crushing responsibility that is theirs.

We believe that many Germans are ready for this. All the evidence goes to show that—as might well be expected—they are a people still completely stunned by the blow they have suffered. As great as their physical hunger will be their hunger for the truth. Now, after twelve years of lies and propaganda, they will be not only ready but eager to listen to a full and straightforward exposition of the causes of their misfortune, and thereafter to turn over a new leaf in their history. What the Germans want to know before all else is just what it is that has happened to them. The answer to that question should be placed in their hands as quickly as possible, before they can fall once more under the influence of demagogues—as

quickly as possible, and in the most effective and authoritative form. Only Germans themselves can do this; the most elementary psychology could tell us that any condescending lectures from outside would be worse than nothing at all.

Everything conceivable must be done to arouse the conscience of all Germans who have not been hopelessly corrupted by the diabolical system of National Socialism, in order to help them to discover the truth and to bring them to the path of spiritual and moral recovery. They must be wrested from the hypnosis effected by twelve years of an infernal propaganda, and they must be convincingly shown that seldom in history has the responsibility for war lain so entirely on the shoulders of a single government or been so entirely indubitable as that of the Third Reich, and that it is the responsibility for the most frightful war of all ages. The Germans must be accustomed once more to sound and nourishing mental food, and must be given books that reveal the imperishable ultimate values of our Western civilization and the satanism of Nazism. The crimes of the regime must be placed before them so relentlessly that not even the most obdurate can deny them any longer. Doubtful as has been the value of the much too elementary world propaganda about the concentration camps, it was undoubtedly salutary for the Germans, though, once more, the most elementary psychology forbids us to expect of them an open confession to their conquerors of their feelings of shame at the Nazi atrocities.

There is no need to explain again here why we may count on the Germans to be ripe for this moral revolution. What they are suffering is the complete bankruptcy of a spirit, a policy, a type of patriotism and of collective morality that the Nazis had utilized in order to carry matters to the uttermost extreme. In blind obstinacy the wrong path was pursued to the end, until the leaders themselves saw no way out except through taking their own lives. The people, as such, will not commit suicide, but will turn back, provided they are shown a way back. The currency of the Greater Prussian collective morality has become as completely valueless; as the mark did in November

1923; there remains no alternative but to create a new spiritual currency.

This moral revolution is the more natural and inevitable since today, in contrast with November 1918, the question of war guilt cannot but be answered quite plainly even by the most stupid or the most evilly disposed person. That is the one and only good result of Hitler's cynicism. Any attempt to talk of a new "war guilt lie" will be disposed of at once by that. Nor is it likely that a new "stab in the back" legend can find anything to feed on. The whole organization of the German armed forces was involved in catastrophe, and the responsibility of the generals for Hitler's rule is so heavy and so unmistakable that they are bound to follow him in downfall and damnation. It is difficult, if not impossible, this time to think of saving any vestige of the glory of Prusso-German arms for a new cult of the flag after they have served under the blood-stained banner of the swastika.

We also mentioned the first signs of awakening and return to reason of the German intellectuals, after we had to speak plainly of their heavy responsibility. Here is the critical and also, perhaps, the most hopeful point of the moral revolution. Once the new ideas and principles have found their way into the universities, the schools, the newspaper staffs, the churches, and the law courts, we shall really be able to speak of a renaissance of Germany. Thus every effort will have to be directed in the first place to furthering the gratifying beginnings of a new outlook among the German intellectuals, to ridding universities, schools, courts, editorial staffs, and churches of the unteachable, and to setting in their place the representatives of a new spirit. The all-important thing is to create a new intellectual elite, which will then see to the communication of the new ideas and standards to a wider public. But it will also be necessary that the men and women involved, completely exhausted in body and mind after twelve and a half years of isolation, brutalization, overexertion, undernourishment, and nervous strain, shall be looked after and given rest and opportunity of spiritual recovery and of renewed contact with the

world. Every effort and every expenditure to this end will repay itself a thousand times over. A world able to control its passions, and to listen only to the voice of reason, would probably regard it as one of the most valuable steps toward the solution of the German question to take some hundreds of German professors, clergymen, editors, and judges at once for several months to an Alpine hotel. There, amid the peaceful glories of nature, with good food and comfort, they would be able through constant touch with foreign colleagues, and through the study of the foreign books, periodicals, and newspapers of the last ten years, to recover the mental and physical energy with which they could successfully take up their office of educators of the people.

With the moral revolution must come Germany's *political revolution*. It can scarcely be necessary for us to say once more what this must consist of—the dissolution of the Bismarckian empire, the relegation of Prussia to the Elbe line, and the creation of a German confederation of autonomous *Länder* (territorial states), which in turn will be ruled on the strict principle of local and regional self-government. It is a revolution that must follow the principle that the rebuilding of Germany must be effected not from above but from below, that is to say from the smallest political units of the *Gemeinde*, the *Kreis*, and the *Land*, a rebuilding that begins with the foundations and not with the roof. It is a further essential element of this revolution that the dominant influence of Prussia shall be broken and the buried tradition of the old German states resuscitated. That means that the Rhineland, Westphalia, Hanover, Hesse, Schleswig-Holstein, and the rest must acquire the rank of independent German states or amalgamate into such states. This is the very cure that corresponds to our detailed diagnosis of the German malady. Germany must regain her character of a "nation of nations," and return to the good traditions from which, three generations ago, she departed to her undoing.

This is at the same time the course that follows with compelling logic from the situation of today.

Some time ago, in a memorandum intended for the Allied diplomats, I wrote:

The whole edifice of the Reich will collapse, and much more completely than in 1918, since the whole framework of the national economy, of the monetary and financial system, of communications and administration, which in 1918 had largely remained intact, will now fall into hopeless ruin. Again in contrast with 1918, there will this time no longer be any organized political life, no parties and programs, no group ready and able to take over the bankrupt estate of the Third Reich, but only prostration and an immense longing for peace, for civilized life, for order and privacy, a longing born of indescribable loathing for dragooning and propaganda, organization and centralization under command. All that is left of the authority and order and tradition of the past will be regarded as an infinite treasure—the classes representing tradition and continuity, especially the peasants; the unchallenged authority of the churches, of the local and regional notables, and perhaps of a monarch like Prince Rupert of Bavaria; the experience and the reputation of some of the former trade union leaders; and the leadership of the intellectual elite of whose latest development we have reported elsewhere.

The memorandum went on:

If we want a closer idea of what such a collapse of Germany really means, we must bear in mind that a cracking social edifice, like any other, will give way at the weakest point. But this weakest point is always the superimposed center. We may therefore expect to find the whole centralized superstructure of Germany giving way under the impact of military, political, and economic disaster, while the local and regional basis will remain standing. There will be no more orders from Berlin and perhaps not even the technical means of transmitting them, but in the villages, the small towns, and even the great cities and the provinces, life will go on in the most elementary forms. The smaller the political units, the better will be the prospect of the early forming once more of an ordered administration, based on the most urgent requirements and on the past traditions of self-government; of the right men, personally known for their ability and integrity, taking the administration in hand; and of no new demagogues and mystical leaders interfering with the sober task of organizing life on a local or regional basis. Here the undeniable German sense of order and discipline and decency will show itself. After the Nazi scoundrels have been dealt with and new attempts to fish in troubled waters have been suppressed, anarchy will be the least likely thing in Germany,



unless we give that name to the spontaneous decentralization that will then be inevitable. This *spontaneous decentralization*, which we must expect after the downfall of Nazi Germany, will be so much the stronger since it will imply the turning away from a center, namely Prussia, which will then be regarded everywhere west of the Elbe as the symbol of a mentality that has lost, to put it mildly, a good deal of its authority.

It was not difficult to be right in these forecasts. With the Third Reich, the German Reich founded by Bismarck came to its end. The third stroke is usually fatal. Germany can be reborn only if she completes the political revolution we have described. We shall add a few considerations of importance as soon as we come to speak of the tasks of the victors.

Now, we said that the moral and the political revolution form a whole. If the political revolution is to be successful, it requires an accompanying moral one. The reverse is also true: the political revolution is the indispensable condition of the moral. Not only will it be an invaluable school of democracy and citizenship for the Germans, facing them with the concrete tasks of local self-administration, and preserving them in the smaller political units from the rule of the impersonal masses, but we are firmly convinced also that the Germans will find their way back to their better selves only if they are liberated from the violation that Greater Prussia and later the centralized unitary state meant for them, and return to the political structure of the period in which they showed to the world other and more likable features. Is not the Austrian in many ways more attractive than the German of the Reich because he did not share the abnormal collective existence to which the German has been condemned from Bismarck's time? We have as yet no idea of how the Bavarian, the Württemberger, the Rhinelander, or the Hanoverian may develop when he is no longer dependent on Berlin but returns to his own tradition—in other words, when he no longer has to live in the "dog kennel" of which, as we mentioned at the outset of this book, Ludwig Bamberger wrote in 1866. Men speak rightly of the necessity of "re-educating" the German. This political revolution is the chief

means of that process, more important than any broadcasting or films or moral lectures; for what, in fact, the re-education of the German means today is to unmake the other and vicious "re-education" that they received from Bismarck after 1866. We advise trying the experiment; there need be no fear about the result. It will be the sort of cure that is produced by giving the ailing body the vitamins it lacks.

Now we can reply at once to the stereotyped objection that this political revolution runs against the current of history, that after Greater Prussia has endured for so long, the tradition of the German races is not now strong enough—or however else the objection may be formulated. In reply to this we have three things to say:

*First*, it is an entirely baseless contention that there is no such thing in history as a return to things that had been mistakenly abandoned. That would mean that there are no renaissances, indeed, no return from a wrong path. It would mean, in short, that in history we must misquote Mephistopheles and say that everything that exists deserves not to be destroyed. Is a drunkard to be able to return to the principles of an earlier and better phase in his career—by renouncing alcohol—and not a whole nation? In the name of what philosophy? Surely, only in the name of a nineteenth-century philosophy of history, now largely discarded, which was under the spell of evolutionist thought. We are afraid that many people will criticize us for wanting to "put the clock back," as the hackneyed phrase goes. Now, not so long ago I put the clock back personally by giving up smoking because I found that it was poisoning me. It was certainly difficult, but it can be done. In the case of Germany we are exactly in the position of a doctor telling his patient that for the sake of his health he must "put the clock back" by stopping smoking. If he says (encouraged by historians who think history runs on a timetable) that is impossible, we cannot help him. That is not to say that we want to resuscitate ghosts by going back, in every respect, to the state of things as they were before 1866.

*Secondly*, it is a complete mistake to suppose that the traditions of the German races have lost their appeal. All our information from Bavaria, Hanover, Westphalia, the Rhineland, and other German territories goes to show the opposite. Fortunately, we may be assured that there is to be found everywhere in western Germany this thoroughly healthy and promising reaction against the herd intoxication of the unitary state—"One Reich, one folk, one Führer!"—against Prussianism, and against the neo-German spirit that came in with it. The former spirit is at least strong enough to be utilized by a clear-sighted and intelligent policy in order to carry out the political revolution we want.

It is almost tragic, however, that many people who have no more love than we have ourselves for the Prussian spirit regard our program of Germany's political revolution as romantic and old-fashioned and consequently unpractical. In doing so they capitulate, no doubt involuntarily, to a mentality that Bismarck sought to spread by every possible means when he gave currency to the defamatory epithets of "enemy of the Reich" or "particularist eccentricity." Must we tell them yet again that Bismarck himself was the worst of separatists when he used armed force to expel Austria, one of the noblest members of the old Germany? So far as Germany is concerned, we must also bear in mind that the development undergone by the Austrian attitude toward the Reich can perfectly well extend to the other German states. Among the Austrians the "antiparticularists" (Socialists and those parties that represented the section of the middle class that was relatively free from bonds of creed and tradition) longed for *Anschluss*; then they had experience of what it was really like, and today they are unanimously fighting for their independence. They are doing what should be only natural also for the Bavarians, the Rhinelanders, and the Hanoverians. By what right can it be suggested that what is permitted to one of the victims of 1866, Austria, should be denied to the other, Hanover? Why should not the Bavarians, the Rhinelanders, the Hanoverians be just as sick of *Anschluss*—which, moreover, was imposed on them by main force—as the Austrians? Anyone

who imagines that they have got used to it is mistaken. They may have been more or less indifferent at the time when the Austrians wanted Anschluss, but the experience of recent years, which has converted the Austrians to a man, will also have opened the eyes of many Bavarians, Hanoverians, and Rhinelanders.

It is undoubtedly true that in the new German Reich—most of all in its last, National Socialist phase—there has been a good deal of migration from state to state. This has, no doubt, smoothed away some of the regional differences and contributed to the making of the appalling *Einheitsdeutscher*—the “standardized” German—who betrays himself at once by his rasping Prussian accent. It is, however, an immense exaggeration, thank heaven, to suggest that the Germans are already so reduced to a homogeneous pulp that their component parts are no longer distinguishable. Germany’s recovery depends essentially on this *Einheitsdeutscher*—who is simply the Bismarckdeutscher with his dangerous mentality—giving place once more to the true type of the Bavarian, Hanoverian, Rhinelander, or Württemberger. Any plan of reform that accepts the “pulp” must fail of its purpose, unless its purpose is actually to preserve the “pulp” on the ground that there is no alternative. The migration within Germany has mainly affected only the industrial centers and the great cities, especially Berlin, and even these in very different degrees, while the bulk of the population of western and southern Germany has been little affected. Munich, thank heaven, is still Bavarian, Hamburg is still itself, Cologne is still Rhenish, and we can only congratulate ourselves if they are determined to remain so.

*Thirdly*, however, we must ask: Just what do you want? Do you want to retain the Greater Prussian Reich in any form? In that case you will have to take the German as he is, for he is the creature of that Reich, and the two are worthy of each other. But do you want another and a more satisfactory type of German, a “re-educated” type? If you want this, you must want the means to it, and must adopt those with good will and insight and intelligence. And do you clearly realize that this

program is the only hopeful one that you can oppose to the collectivist one announced from Moscow—and now from Berlin?

But this brings us to the third revolution, *economic and social*. The purpose of the moral revolution is to shake off the spirit of the Bismarckian Reich, and that of the political revolution is to get rid of its constitutional structure; the purpose of the economic revolution must be to make a complete change in its economic and social form. Germany has to be liberated from the degeneracies of monopoly-and-proletariat capitalism, of the growth of the masses, of agrarian and industrial feudalism, of proletarianization, of concentration and overorganization, of the agglomeration of industrial power and the destruction of the individuality of labor, in short, from all the economic and social causes of the social crisis of our day, to which, as we have seen, she has fallen victim in so exceptional a degree since Bismarck. If the socio-economic malady that so ravaged Germany, and that prepared the way for Nazism, may be called precollectivism and collectivism, and if under Nazism it developed into an almost mortal fever, the cure can consist only in the completely opposite anticollectivist program I have described and defended elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> By that may be measured the insanity of the idea of proposing to bring happiness to this unfortunate country with a collectivism that is distinguishable from that of Nazism only by its color and by the different group that would lord it over the people and treat them to its myths and slogans and its own particular mental procrusteanism.

Here we are met at once by the objection that this very regime of collectivism of the past twelve years, with its war and mass bombings and defeat, has so transformed Germany into a pulp of proletarianized masses, used to a stereotyped pattern of community life, that any but a collectivist program would be utopian. If that means that these proletarianized masses, in their desperate state, would be particularly susceptible

<sup>1</sup> In my books *Die Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart* (4th ed., Erlenbach-Zurich, 1944), *Civitas humana* (Erlenbach-Zurich, 1944; shortly to be published in English translation by W. Hodge & Co.), *Internationale Ordnung* (Erlenbach-Zurich, 1945), and *Die Lehre von der Wirtschaft* (3rd ed., Erlenbach-Zurich, 1943). Of all these books translations in French are available.

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to a repetition of collectivist demagoguery, unhappily we can only emphatically agree. If it means further that the victims of the bombings will long be condemned to the abnormal life of barracks and public kitchens and uprootedness, we can only bow to a lamentable fact. But if it means that at bottom these masses want nothing better in this life, then we can only shake our heads.

If today one of these proletarianized Germans—one of the workmen or clerks or past members of the middle class—were asked his idea of paradise, we may be sure that among his first aspirations would be a small house of his own with a garden and a goat shed, an undisturbed family life without training courses, mass meetings, processions, and political flag days; dignity and pleasure in his work, an independent if modest existence, harmony and concord in the family, the neighborhood, the church, the immediate surroundings; leisure evenings on which he can read a good book, have a look at the seedlings, discuss the big and little questions of the day with his neighbors over the fence, or have a little music or potter about at home, without being upset by the broadcast bawling of some new collectivist Führer. He will be determined to do everything to bring nearer the fulfillment of this dream; he will work and save as never before; he will be happy over the most modest progress, after his experience of what real privation means, and will rather build his own cottage in the most primitive fashion than once more be boxed in a monster block of tenements. The very fact of the fearful destruction of the great German cities has made it possible and even perhaps necessary to proceed to really extensive decentralization of housing and of industries.

We are therefore of the opinion that Germany offers particularly favorable conditions for carrying out an anticollectivist program, for the very reason that she has pursued the collectivist path to the very end and must now return to her point of departure. Not everyone will clearly see this; many will have only a vague feeling of what it is that they want. Such people will easily have their heads turned by the apostles of collectivism. But there are several reasons for believing that these apostles are



themselves none too hopeful about the task in front of them. One is that even the "Free Germany Committee" founded and inspired by Moscow has not yet ventured to come forward with a collectivist economic program, but has carried opportunism to the grotesque length of placing "free initiative in trade and industry" on its program. These people probably say to themselves, not without justice, that they are sure of the Communists in any case and may count on being understood by them if they appeal to the other classes with reassuring items of this sort in working to secure political control in Germany, on the attainment of which they will be able to do as they like—tactics thoroughly reminiscent of those of Hitler. But the very fact that it is considered that these other classes can be won over by anti-collectivist slogans show us that such subtle interpreters of the mind of the people as the Communists are entirely in agreement with us that the aspirations of the Germans today run absolutely counter to the Communist aim. So much the more reason have the rest of us to realize these aspirations and really to satisfy them, instead of cheating them as was done in the past by the Nazis when they promised freedom and independence to the peasants and artisans.

We need scarcely add that this economic and social revolution forms with the moral and the political revolution a whole whose parts mutually support each other. The moral revolution will have a really profound effect only if it is accompanied not merely by the political but also by the economic and social revolution that will liberate the Germans from collectivism, mass formation, and proletarianization, as the political revolution will liberate them from Prussification, mass democracy, and centralism.

No less intimate is the relation between the economic and social revolution and the political one. Only if the Germans are cured of regimentation and proletarianization will they really turn away for good from the narcotics of nationalism and totalitarianism, and recoil in disgust from every sort of political mass hysteria. It must further be borne in mind that the federative character of Germany to which the political revolution must

lead can be associated with an economic structure that is pronouncedly anticollectivist, just as, conversely, federalism would make collectivism impossible in Germany in the future.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore only logical that the new collectivists, who think of entering in Germany into the heritage of the Nazis, should be advocates of the unitary state, and should combat federalism with all the catchwords of the Greater Prussian mentality.

#### THE TASK AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VICTORS

The solution of the German question contained in this three-fold revolution is the only one that holds out the promise of real permanence. It permits the fulfillment of all just and reasonable claims from the victors for the future security of Europe in face of Germany; and at the same time it is the solution that every German patriot with clear vision and good will must desire for his homeland, once he has himself recognized the nature of the German question. Germany became a danger to her neighbors because she had become infected with a grave malady. It is therefore the common interest of victors and vanquished that she should at last be thoroughly cured.

Broadly, therefore, the victors need only desire and promote what the Germans themselves would have had to aim at if there had been no war and no defeat. Seldom in history can the conditions have been so favorable for a just and reasonable peace (which, so far as Germany is concerned, would have every prospect of being also a lasting peace), and for a treatment of the vanquished worthy of the civilization of the victors and of the cause on behalf of which they went to war. Broadly, the victors, if their aim is a reasonable and a just peace, that is to say a real solution of the German question, need only act in such a way as to promote the threefold revolution.

In the first place, so far as concerns the *moral revolution*, the conditions are favorable even from the point of view of the relation of the Germans to the Allies. This applies especially to the western Allies, with regard to whom, in spite of all the

<sup>2</sup> The incompatibility of federalism and collectivism is shown in my book *Civitas humana* (Zurich ed., p. 67 ff.).

propaganda of the Nazi government, the Germans are satisfied that they intend to treat the vanquished with justice and in accordance with the principles of Western civilization, to which especially the German west of the Elbe adheres today more strongly than ever. The almost complete destruction of the German cities, which condemned hundreds of thousands to a terrible death and made just as many into beggars overnight, represents a very heavy mortgage on the future, but it is probable that it has made no substantial change in the readiness of the Germans to come to terms with the victors. It should be possible to convince the Germans that the bombing was part of the general conduct of the war into which the Nazis had forced the Allies to enter. Should the Germans have forgotten it, they will have to be reminded that they were the first to adopt this barbaric method, and that through their press they had given their enemies, who did not know that in a totalitarian state there is no public opinion, the impression that they felt nothing but satisfaction at the bombing of Warsaw, Rotterdam, London, or Coventry. The Germans, even those who were strongly anti-Nazi, must understand that the war could be waged only on the strictly territorial principle, and could thus make no distinction between just and unjust, and that to that extent the decent Germans were bound to share liability with the Nazis. So much the more strongly should the victors adhere to the view that while the war had to be waged on the territorial principle (*locus regit actum*, as the phrase runs in international private law), the peace should be concluded on the personal principle, that is to say with the strictest distinction between Nazis and the rest of the Germans.

This *distinction between the seducers and their victims* is the most important means by which the victors can promote the moral revolution; indeed, it seems to us to be the indispensable condition for it. It demands on the one hand that the whole Nazi hierarchy shall be proceeded against with the utmost rigor; but on the other hand that the rest of the Germans shall be treated in a way that assures the victors of the collaboration without which they cannot administer Germany as civilized

men, a way, moreover, that allows free play to the moral revolution in Germany. Either the problem of Germany will be solved with the Germans, or it will not be solved at all, and our principle supplies the only possibility of solution. It preserves the Germans from a nihilistic despair from which the worst would have to be feared. It opens to them the gateway to our common civilization, to which they must be won back if there is to be the slightest hope for our continent. It is the indispensable condition for the moral revolution in Germany, without which all else would be in vain.

This same principle of differentiation permits the victors to avoid the barbaric policy of summary punishment and reprisals that made the Nazis the curse of Europe. It gives them the opportunity of replying to barbarism with justice, reason, and humanity, and saves them from infection by the poison of collective hatred and national pride that brought Germany to the ground—a poison that today menaces the whole world. It is the principle so well expressed by G. K. Chesterton—"When civilized men fight cannibals they do not eat them."

Let the leading Nazis, then, be treated with all the harshness they have so richly earned. Let them be expropriated and put into labor battalions for the rebuilding of Europe, so far as they are not to be condemned as criminals. But let the other Germans be given hope, and do not let the precious but fugitive moment pass in which the Germans will decide, according to the treatment they receive from the victors, whether to pursue the path of "repentance and rebirth," or to turn away embittered and disappointed. Nothing would make a deeper impression on the Germans, after witnessing twelve and a half years' triumph of injustice and summary judgment, than such a reign of equity, which would imply the restoration of civilization and of personal responsibility. Nothing would do more to produce a new and healthy condition of public life in Germany. "There would be little use in punishing the Hitlerites for their crimes if law and justice did not rule, and if totalitarian or police governments were to take the place of the German invaders," said Mr. Churchill in his broadcast on May 13, 1945,

after the conclusion of the armistice agreement, and we may be sure that many Germans listened attentively—and with a little hope.

If the Allies proceeded differently from this, they would not merely be “eating the cannibals”—they would be playing into the hands of the Russians.

It is no longer particularly difficult to say what is the Russians' game. They regard the zone of Germany under their occupation as their exclusive preserve, and as shown by the feverish activity of their German henchmen, their ultimate aims are far-reaching. While they are excluding the western Allies from all influence in the territory east of the Elbe, they are obviously pursuing a policy of infiltration in western Germany, in order in the end to bring this, too, under their influence with the aid of their agents, their broadcasting, and their Communist cells, in the name of the social revolution and also in that of the maintenance of the unity of the Reich and of its Prussian traditions. Meanwhile they will permit themselves, true to the tactics of the Communists in many other countries, to carry out the social revolution in such stages and with such tactics of opportunism as seem expedient. To attain this aim they will do all they can to gain the sympathy of the German masses. They will note with satisfaction the western Allies' hatred of Germany and the propaganda by means of which the Allies are actually promoting it; meanwhile, in spite of their own terrible sufferings at German hands, they will probably not permit themselves a policy of passion, which is always disastrous.

Nobody today<sup>3</sup> has any reliable knowledge of what is going on behind the iron curtain with which the Russians have shut off their sphere east of the Elbe. They are allowing the world to know only what they want it to know—the world, and especially the western Germans. It is with this reservation that we must accept the news that in Berlin and in other cities the Russians are pursuing a reasonable and generous policy toward the Germans. In any case they want the western Germans to

<sup>3</sup> Spring 1945.

see them in this light, and in any case this is the policy demanded by common sense. The more the western Allies were to do the opposite, the more certainly would the Russians attain the aim of their policy of infiltration. All the more so since they can point out, and not without truth, that the fearful work of destroying the German towns was left mainly to their allies, a fact that in itself gives the Russians an advantage.

From the standpoint of the victors, too, the solution of the German question by means of the threefold revolution forms a whole whose parts condition each other. They can carry out the policy of just and humane treatment of the Germans, which favors the moral revolution, with the more assurance the more resolutely they promote at the same time the political and the economic revolution.

If the Allies adopt our conception of the essential *political revolution* it will be well not to try to force it upon the Germans, but to make a point of avoiding anything that might disturb or even cripple the forces of Germany's spontaneous political decentralization. They will find it useful to encourage the Germans with their own experience, and to give them advice in the task of building up a new political life once more in the small political units on democratic and liberal principles. Sooner or later they will become convinced of the necessity of giving help to the industrial regions with their motley proletarian population, and to the inhabitants of the destroyed cities, as man to man. But everywhere the wisest thing will be to turn to the leading classes that represent tradition and continuity, and to the persons who enjoy natural authority, to collaborate with them—in the identification and punishment of the worst Nazis as in other matters—and to leave them as free a hand as possible in the work of reconstruction.

While in the smallest administrative districts the Allies should transfer sole responsibility as soon as possible to the Germans, they have a special task in connection with the organization of these districts in larger units. Loose as the German federation of states may be at first, it will be necessary to set up a central authority for the temporary purpose of the fulfillment of the

conditions of armistice and of peace and for the permanent task of ensuring a minimum of integration in trade and industry, currency and finance. This control co-ordination should be reserved by the Allies to themselves alone for a reasonable period, until we may have reason to hope that the German problem has been solved within the framework of a new European order. In this way they will give the German states time to strengthen their separate life and their regional consciousness to such a degree that they will later face a federal center in German hands with the whole weight of a re-established regional tradition.

This task of the Allies stands out still more clearly if we indicate the *two main errors* they may commit. One would be to regard the imperial unit forged by Bismarck as inviolable and as an outcome of historic evolution that cannot be unmade. It has been one of the main purposes of this book to show that that view is unjustified and dangerous. To make it the basis of a policy for Germany would not only mean letting slip for a second time after 1918 a unique opportunity for solving the German question, but would actually result in making the problem more insoluble than ever. If the victors respect German "unity," they will find themselves compelled to treat this "German lump" all the more harshly, in order to punish it and by main force to render it harmless for a long time to come. If Greater Prussia is left intact, logic will demand that it be held down by all sorts of measures of compulsion, territorial mutilations, a harsh occupation, and strict control, and by a brutal weakening of its economic capacity. It is true that in this way peace, so far as it might be threatened by Germany, might be assured for some time—so long, in fact, as the existing alliances remain intact. But it is more than probable that the readiness of the Germans for reflection and regeneration would turn into hatred, treachery, and exasperation. The result would be the triumphant resurrection of Prussia and of a Prussianized Germany, perhaps under a Communist totalitarianism.

That would be one of the two main errors. The other would be a dismemberment of Germany with the open intention of punishing her and crippling her. Such an enforced partition of

the Reich would be the surest way of hopelessly discrediting a movement that otherwise would be entirely natural and would correspond to the policy that sensible and clearheaded Germans would themselves regard as the only possible way of escape from their situation. Every German federalist would be regarded at once as a "separatist" and a traitor to the common German cause; all forces of spontaneous political decentralization would be crippled, and the Prussian mentality would triumph once more.

The second error would be the more unpardonable since it is completely unnecessary if all that has been said in this book carries any conviction.

Thus the sensible policy would be to carry out the political decentralization and de-Prussification of Germany *with* the Germans and not *against* them. It would be granted to them as a concession, not imposed as a punishment. In this way two birds would be killed with one stone: Europe—exactly as Heeren prophesied and demanded 120 years ago (see page 154)—would be protected from Germany in a way that every clear-minded German could at the same time regard as the one real solution of the problem of his own country, and which, as a good German and a good European, he could urgently recommend to his fellow countrymen with the profoundest conviction. Thus the aim of rendering Germany impotent for any new offensive policy would be attained without any embittering measures, while the severest punishment of all who have been directly responsible for the Third Reich and its crimes would find nothing but enthusiastic assent from every honorable German.

By a prudent and well-considered policy of this sort, carried out with psychological tact and with judicious treatment of German public opinion, it should be possible largely to harmonize the interests and feelings of victors and of Germans, at least to the extent needed for the safeguarding of Germany's moral revolution. Only then would every attempt at the "re-education of the Germans" be anything else but a labor of Sisyphus. Then, too, the last reason will be removed for a policy



of mutilation of German industry, which would gravely injure not only Germany but Europe. The victors will also be able to be guided with so much the more freedom by the aims of the economic and social revolution we have described. Let us leave untouched at present the question of the extent to which Germany as a whole can and must make good the damage done in Europe by her criminal government. Only this must be said, that it would be shortsighted to demand more from the Germans than is compatible with the threefold revolution, that is to say with the solution of the German question, which must be of even more importance to Europe than the shortening of the period of reconstruction by a few years or months. It would also be unfair for the brave opponents of Nazism who remained in Germany as "internal emigrants" to be now further penalized with reparation claims, although they showed greater courage than not a few "external" emigrants who now might actually be receiving compensation from them. And if it is rightly intended to impose on Austria no reparation obligation or only a small one, with what justice could it be proposed to treat, say, Bavaria more severely? Was not Bavaria overrun by the Austrian Hitler in 1933 in exactly the same way as Austria in 1938, and did not the same elements offer resistance in the one case as in the other? Did not the first revolt of professors and students take place in Munich (spring 1943), to be suppressed with bloodshed? And did not the Bavarians rise although, unlike the Austrians, no hope of special treatment was held out to them by the Allies? Is the case of the Rhineland very different? All this goes to show what caution will be needed in order to proceed with justice.

If, however, anyone should consider, in spite of all we have said, that the Germans as a whole must still be "punished" for Nazism and its crimes, we reply that it is already too late for this summary penal treatment. Anything worse than what the Germans have already endured and have still to endure could scarcely be devised. We will emphasize, however, that on the other hand the policy we have recommended does not exclude the most stringent military provisions (in particular the pro-

hibition of the manufacture of armaments, the disbanding of the corps of officers, the razing of fortresses, and so on), or reparations, or ruthless suppression of any new stirring of German nationalism, or any other necessary measures of precaution.

Now we have to meet the objection that our recommendations amount to inducing the victors, for the second time within a generation, to treat the Germans with an exaggerated leniency that seems even less justified today than in 1919.

This objection is based on a misunderstanding. To begin with, it is possible so to interpret the practical results of the peace treaty of Versailles that the blame for them is attributed not so much to the mildness of the provisions of the treaty as to that of their application. This, however, was largely the result of the breaking up of the alliances, which to any realistic observer should have appeared to be almost inevitable. If at that time there was exaggerated optimism, did it not lie rather in the supposition that the diplomatic combination of 1919 could be made permanent, and that in consequence the system of military and economic control that depended on it could be effectively maintained for an indefinite time? Would it not have been better, in 1919 just as today, as farseeing Frenchmen familiar with the problem of Germany wanted, to go to the root of the problem and to make a radical change in Germany's political structure, and at the same time to encourage the democratic and liberal elements of that country by as conciliatory a policy as possible?

Of still greater importance, we think, is a second point: The policy we recommend is the most prudent for the further reason that it leaves open every possibility for the future. It is impossible to modify the two other alternative policies for Germany, which we regard as mistaken, and later to change over from one of them to our policy. But our policy offers the opportunity of passing over to any other policy if it should prove that it is we who are mistaken. The injury done by either of the first-named policies for Germany will be beyond repair. What we propose instead can, on the contrary, cause no irreparable injury. This policy has also the further advantage that it is thoroughly

elastic and can at any time be adjusted to changing circumstances and to experience gained, an advantage of particular importance in the case of a problem that contains so many unknown quantities. For a long time to come the federal link between the German states would be kept as loose as possible, and if one or another state should aim at full autonomy or at association with a foreign state, perhaps nothing should be put in its way. All this is the more possible since under our proposal the central control of the federation would lie at first not in German hands at all but in the hands of the Allies. On this secure basis they could calmly watch further developments and take any necessary precautions. Should the Germans disappoint the Allies, the latter would still hold all the trumps. No one could undertake the responsibility of recommending another policy to them and advising a course that would end in their losing the peace once more. Only we must add that it is possible to lose the peace through other things besides mildness.

But now it is our duty to make clear one last point. This refers to the brutal fact that a line now runs right through Germany, dividing two worlds from each other—the line that separates eastern Germany, under Russian occupation, from western Germany, under the occupation of the western Allies. Thus the Elbe has become a limes of the Western world, carrying with it complete segregation in the matter of moral, political, social, and economic principles. This limes runs farther south along the Bohemian forest and across Austria, involving for this latter country conclusions that may be similar to those that we have to draw for Germany.

How will a solution be found for the problem of dividing Germany into occupation zones without thereby introducing at the same time zones of political influence and without making the common administration of the country impossible? At the Yalta conference a compromise solution was envisaged under which a distinction was to be drawn between the purely military occupation by the individual powers and central administration by an interallied commission. It must be said at once that this complicated plan seems scarcely practicable. The

fundamental conceptions of the two groups of Allies, western and eastern, are far too different to permit of such a condominium, which is always extremely difficult and of which history has nothing but deterrent examples to show. In addition to this, the interallied commission is to have its headquarters in the Russian area.

This plan seems practicable only in the most unlikely event of the western group placing themselves entirely under Russian leadership or vice versa. In practice it will prove that no clear-cut line can be drawn between the regional military occupation and the central general administration. The Allied general who "occupies" Hanover will be responsible at the same time for orderly administration and for a minimum of economic well-being in his command, and thus a certain solidarity of interests between him and the Germans under him will grow up automatically. It will be entirely natural that the Allied general will be inclined to defend these mutual regional interests in face of instructions from a central authority that, far from being that of his own country, is actually under the strong influence of an enigmatic power alien to the West, if the demands do not actually come direct from the Reparation Commission at Moscow. It does not seem a rash forecast that this situation west of the Elbe will strongly favor the regional autonomy we want. At the same time it will create a certain community of political, economic, and intellectual life in this part of Germany, which has always looked to the west rather than to the east. This community would correspond to that which binds together the western Allies in spite of their avoidable and unavoidable rivalries.

In the foregoing pages we have spoken in general terms of a federation of all autonomous German states, but we must now take account for the present of the harsh reality of the limes. We come then to the conclusion that under the existing circumstances the federal reorganization of Germany must for the present be confined to the German territory west of the Elbe, a *West German federation* being created with the western Allies at its head.

Within this narrower political and moral framework the solution must also be considered of the problem of Germany's economic revolution. The character of our West German federation would take away from the Allies the last motive for mutilating the German economic potential and so doing a thing that, we repeat, would unquestionably run counter to their interests, and that would certainly not be done by the Russians if they were in the place of the Allies. If the western Allies assure to themselves for a considerable time the control of the federation and exercise it with consideration for the Germans, they will have made sure of all the supervision they can want. By this central control the whole economic life of west Germany, and in particular currency, credit, communications, and finance, would be co-ordinated to the extent desired.

If, however, it is insisted that political, intellectual, and economic interconnection shall be maintained between eastern Germany under the Russians and western Germany under the western powers while we have to deal with a totalitarian Russia, and if the "Reich" is still considered as a unit for which constitutional plans can be forged, this will mean either a failure to grasp the realities or a deliberate intention to promote the Russians' policy of extending their influence step by step throughout Germany. The more insistence there is upon Germany's "unity," the more generously opportunities will be offered for the Russian policy of infiltration and the more points of friction will be created between the two worlds, whose entanglement on German soil would be one of the greatest perils for peace. Far from favoring the "third world war" that is today the bogey of the Western world, the clear cut advocated between the two worlds would very greatly reduce that peril.

Thus the solution of the German question is a stage along the road to the mastery of the greater though remoter world problems that today, after Germany's collapse, are coming into view. We firmly believe that an opportunity unique in all history is offered of settling the German question. But we should be lacking in candor if we failed to add with emphasis that the success of such a policy depends upon one supreme condition—that it

is guided by cool reason that takes account of the future, and not by the passions of the moment. We know how infinitely difficult that is, but we regard it as our duty at this moment to draw attention to the pregnancy of the decisions with which the world is faced. We shall close with the remark that the hand held out to us by History today will not be extended long. We must grasp it quickly.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

Two years have now passed since the preceding chapter on what ought to be done with Germany was written, and almost two years since the overthrow and the complete occupation of Germany. What progress has been made in these critical years in the solution of the German problem? A dispassionate answer with justice to all sides can only be that the progress made has been utterly disappointing. Two years ago, Germany was a molten mass ready for pouring into the right molds. The moment for this was missed; the metal has cooled and toughened. Two years ago, when this book was written in its original form, it was possible to indicate the paths to a real solution of the German problem and to have confidence in their practicability. Today it must be confessed that at critical points the exact opposite has been done of what should have been done, and that an opportunity has been let slip that all eternity cannot bring back. Warnings have gone unheard, appeals have fallen on deaf ears, and at moments one feels inclined to remark bitterly: *Il n'y a plus aucune faute à commettre*. The result is that everywhere a feeling of hopelessness and desperation is spreading with regard to Germany. This feeling is understandable, and yet it must be most strenuously combated, lest we should resign ourselves to the doom that threatens. Thus we are bound to speak openly of errors, neither in denunciation nor in exculpation, but in the effort to make clear what should be done now.

After the failure of every attempt to bring down the Nazi regime in time, and to establish contact during the war between

the German opposition to the regime and the Allies insisting on "unconditional surrender," any solution of the German question was bound to be a desperate enterprise; this was at all times obvious. It was known that the victors would have to take over the government of a country left by its criminal rulers in a state of material, political, and moral ruin. This was realized, and it was realized, too, what it involved. Perhaps the frightful mortgage of the ruined cities, of the chaos of the displaced persons, of the passions inevitably aroused by Germany's masters, crushing though it looked, was still underestimated. But on top of all this there came further encumberments of any constructive German policy, errors that did more than all else to make the situation desperate. It was anticipated that the four powers would share out the occupation of Germany, but not that they would demarcate their zones so arbitrarily and shut them off from each other with such crippling effect on German economy. It was anticipated that Soviet Russia would be given a share in the occupation of Germany, but not that such a large and economically important part would be given to this totalitarian power whose westernmost point now lies only about 120 miles from the Rhine. It was anticipated that this participation of Russia in the occupation of Germany would mean her being cut into two separate parts, but not that the western powers would not feel compelled all the more to administer their zones as an economic unit. It was anticipated that the Germans in eastern Germany and other countries then at the mercy of the tormented and outraged Slavs would have to suffer for the criminal policy of the Nazis, but not that things would happen there that would destroy the basis of the German food supply and would fill western Germany with millions of uprooted refugees. It was only the ominous Potsdam conference in the summer of 1945 that revealed fully the fatal road along which we were traveling—a road along which the most important milestones had been the previous conferences of Teheran and Yalta.

This vast mortgaging faced the victors, who were not out simply to trample on the vanquished, with a most difficult and thankless task. Leaving aside the vast Russian zone, where, as



any clearheaded person could expect, a terrorist totalitarian system has been established that is little different in essence from the past National Socialist system, we have to report that in the western zones admirable results that have been obtained here or there by the Allied administration have been vitiated by the failure of the German policies in general and by countless cases of bitter injustice and the disappointing behavior of individual members of the Allied armies and administration personnel. The devastating results of all this on the German mind have for a long time not been taken seriously enough, and much of it—especially in the most ticklish problem of denazification—could have been avoided if relations of confidence had been established at once between the occupying authorities and the genuine and proved anti-Nazis and non-Nazis, whether Christian, socialist, liberal, or democrat; that is to say, those Germans—and there were many—who had welcomed the Allies with sincere relief and joy as real liberators. Unfortunately, the Allies, by their policy of making next to no distinction between Germans and Germans, confirmed Dr. Goebbels when he had told the people that this was a war of survival for the Germans and not for the regime alone and that they were all in the same boat. The thesis of the collective guilt of all Germans, which served as an excuse for the worst blunders of the Allies in Germany, could have been posthumously invented by Dr. Goebbels. It has been desperately depressing for all anti-Nazis and non-Nazis, and it has led to a penal instead of a re-educative treatment of all Germany. She was turned into a vast prison colony or a great Kaffir kraal of which foreign explorers reported strange and gruesome things. The "Europeans" who had been in this kraal as prisoners of the Kaffirs were overlooked. The liberators even felt really annoyed when those "Europeans" made themselves known, and they told them that their efforts to distinguish themselves from the Kaffirs were simply disgusting pharisaisms. Perhaps exceptions were made for the Communists, to whom the western Allies, in their helplessness and confusion, entrusted important posts, not knowing that in this way they were exchanging one brand of totalitarians for another and firmly establishing in

power people who ultimately would reveal themselves as their worst enemies, quite apart from the fact that everywhere the Communists were a ridiculous minority. Only by taking all this into account can measures be understood that give the impression that it has been considered of no importance to have regard to the possible reactions they would arouse among Germans. When all the inhabitants of a whole district of a great city—mostly workers with large families—are compelled, under the threat of machine guns, at a moment's notice to clear out in order to make way for families of officers of the occupying army, what else are they likely to become but convinced Nazis, Communists, or anarchists?

#### A "HARD" PEACE

When we heard during the war that the Allies demanded the unconditional surrender of Germany, we were doubtful about the wisdom of such a course. We had supposed, however, that the Allies, when demanding a completely free hand in Germany, had a definite plan in their mind as to what political shape they would give the country. When they insisted on taking over complete responsibility for Germany, we took it for granted that they had come to some working agreement on what to do with this problem child. Now we know that we were mistaken. Among the victors only Russia could be said to have had a German policy at all, that is the policy to incorporate Germany in one way or another in her political and economic system, and to extend her zone of influence as far west as possible. In their choice of means for this end the Russians have shown an amazing flexibility, but the end has never been in doubt, and even while adapting their means to this end they have been sticking so far unwaveringly at least to one point; that is, to the policy of demanding a unified and centralized Germany and of opposing any federal decentralization of this country. This fact is abundant proof of the importance the Russians attribute to a centralized Germany for their political aims, and it should be equally abundant proof for the western Allies of the importance they ought to attribute to a decentralized Germany for their

own political aims. But in contrast to the Russians, it cannot be said of the western Allies that they had, until very recently, any German policy at all, that is to say, any clear and definite plan of what to do with this country permanently. The nearest approach to such a policy worthy of its name has been the French attitude of opposing the re-establishment of any central German government just as fiercely as the Russians have been favoring it. But, since French opinion as to the real alternative of a centralized Germany has never been very clear, even this opposition has been so far only negative and sterile. Moreover, as the French policy in Germany has given all too often the impression that the slogan of federalism was being used for solely separatist purposes, it has been conducive to discrediting the case of German federalism and thus to weakening instead of strengthening it.

Since even the French were not able to offer any serious alternative to the Russian policy in Germany, it is natural that the Russians have been holding the field so far. As we see now, the main objective of the Allies in Germany has been to watch Russia, mostly in order to placate her, sometimes in order to check her, but almost invariably leaving the initiative to her. The surest line in all this seemed to be what was called a "hard peace" for Germany. Rarely has a word been used with so much confusion and with such disastrous consequences.

What could have been the meaning of a "hard peace" for Germany? To many this was nothing but the expression of the mood that the world has "to give to Germany what she deserves." But unless we want international politics to sink to the base level of an instrument for satisfying our fleeting and uncontrolled passions, we cannot treat a whole nation with the righteous indignation with which we spank a naughty child and then call it politics. We cannot behave as a berserk and afterward deeply regret what we have done, while leaving the field to others who follow a more sober and rational policy. The Western world will not make any headway in Germany and it will certainly lose this game whose stake is the future not only of Europe but of the whole world if its policy is dictated by

indiscriminate hatred instead of discerning justice and cool reason that looks to the future and not into a distorted picture of the past. To believe in the collective responsibility of all Germans is a revival of the racial hatred of the Nazis that is unworthy of any honest and intelligent man; it reminds us of the anti-Semites who still make every Jew responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. To call all Germans criminal and to ask for their just punishment may have been, for some time and for people bearing no particular responsibility, just one humanly comprehensible way of giving an indistinct expression to a violent indignation at satanic actions for which the real responsibility could not be defined at once. Today everybody ought to know better. Today we are only too well aware that this whole philosophy was not only poor reasoning, bad digestion of facts, and dubious morals, but above all the worst possible policy. Its outcome has been that idea of a "hard peace" which meant a peace turning Germany into a sort of super Buchenwald or a colossal penal colony. Whether we thereby give to Germany "what she deserves" or not, we certainly do not give her what *we* deserve—we the people outside of Germany who shall not cease to feel unhappy about all this misery, to have a bad conscience about it, and to hate all this pharisaical self-righteousness about the Germans, we the people outside of Germany who want the German problem to be solved in such a way that it will not give rise directly or more probably indirectly to new bloody conflicts in our lifetime or in that of our children, we who all have to suffer if the country is to be turned into a semirural slum, we who have to pay for this policy in all possible ways, including hard cash, and who are increasingly less concerned about what one totalitarian government did in the past than about what another totalitarian government may do in the future, and who increasingly feel that this will largely depend on what we do with Germany now. Revenge may be sweet, but you have to pay for it.

The slogan "a hard peace for Germany" proved so successful because the plausible was inextricably mixed with the untenable. All agreed that after this most criminal and devastating war

something extremely drastic had to be done in Germany, and any sentimentality would have been ill placed indeed. There was an elementary and not ignoble sense of justice and retribution to be satisfied, and then we had to see to it that this should not happen again. So something "hard" had to be done by all means. But "hard" in what sense, and "hard" for whom?

The peace could have been and still can be "hard" in a three-fold sense. First, it can be hard for Germany as such; that is, a peace that changes drastically and uncompromisingly the political structure of the German state. Secondly, the peace can be hard for the Germans as the people living in this state and able to suffer physically and mentally. Thirdly, it may be hard for some Germans alone, that is for those who really deserve it. Those are the three possible meanings of a hard peace, and by making it hard or soft in all or hard in some and soft in other respects one can work out a nice number of variations.

Now, it is not difficult to say what variety of hard peace has been applied so far to Germany. It is certainly a peace that is hard, and even extremely hard, on *all* scores. By making a geographical hash of Germany, by wiping Germany as a political entity simply off the map, by cutting off large parts and by rending the rest to pieces, the peace could not be harder on Germany as such. By hanging or by meting out other severe punishments it is for those held responsible as hard a peace as we might wish, though it might be agreed that, in this respect, it is not nearly hard enough. But at the same time we have no need to prove that it is also a peace that could not be harder for all the other Germans.

Nor is it difficult to say what would have been instead the right variety of hard peace. First of all, it would be a peace hard on Germany, not in the sense of cutting off large parts of the German territory but in that of changing the political structure of Germany radically so as to destroy the centralized Reich founded by Bismarck and dominated by Prussia and replacing it by a more or less loose federation of the several German states. Secondly, it would be a peace hard on all those who are personally responsible for the Third Reich and all its horrible misdeeds.

While being as hard as possible for all these men who deserve neither pity nor mercy, the peace would be at the same time really soft for the remaining Germans; that is to say, it would be a peace that did not treat them as conquered people whom we are entitled to kick, to let starve, to expel from their houses, to humiliate, or to deny the blessings of the rule of law, but as human beings who either were opponents of National Socialism (often braver than we were) or merely timid and stupid, like the majority of all people, and therefore worthy at least of a minimum of decency, fairness, and Christian charity. In being soft for the German people as such, the peace would give them a chance and a hope of creating for themselves and for their children tolerable conditions of a new dignified life, while this same peace, being hard on Germany as a state, would place this individual life within a new political and social framework. This latter, together with the example of justice set by the Allies in being hard on the really responsible people but soft for the rest, would make possible the work of German re-education. Let us add that such a peace would be hard on Germany (not on the Germans) also in the sense that the Allies would take all the necessary military precautions against an unrepentant Germany. But even in this field of military precaution a good deal of circumspection seems indicated. In this atomic age, it is possible to overrate the danger coming from the war potential of Germany, relative to dangers coming from other quarters. At any rate, Germany ought to be held down by means that do not increase the danger coming from other quarters. For this reason, it would seem a shortsighted policy to establish any international control commissions for the Ruhr industry that would answer the wish of the Russians to get a foothold in western Germany. It would be a tragic irony if the western Allies, for fear of the crushed Germans, let the Russians into western Europe.

It did not need a superhuman intelligence to recommend this variety of "hard" peace as the right and reasonable course. Unfortunately, those who had to make the first fateful decisions thought otherwise. By combining almost all mistakes that could possibly be made at the same time, they have created conditions

in Germany under which the highly creditable efforts of all the clear-thinking, able, and well-meaning men in the Allied administration in Germany were bound to prove on the whole unavailing. Even some very praiseworthy achievements like the early establishment of democratic governments of the different German states in the American zone and their co-ordination in the *Länderrat* remained without wider repercussions on the whole situation in Germany.

While the Allies clearly had no idea of what to do with the Germans politically and spiritually and not even of how to behave toward them individually, their policy seemed to be inspired by some very primitive notions of a negative character. To cripple, to mutilate, to prohibit, to dismantle, to take away, to destroy material wealth, to seize property, to deprive people of their livelihood, to block accounts, to shut Germany off intellectually from the outside world, to ban or even burn books as if they still had to be dreaded, to ask for forms and questionnaires in endless number—a not inconsiderable amount of such unpleasant things has been unfortunately necessary and some part of it might still be defended here or there as the lesser of two evils. The calamity, however, is that these purely negative and often spiteful things have not only been done in excess but for a long time have been made the mainstay of Allied policy in Germany, because it was the easiest thing to conceive and to do, and because whenever you do not know what to do, the safest thing to do is to say no.

It was principally this complete lack of vision and imagination, coupled perhaps with even less respectable reasons, that has been at the origin of the absurd idea of making Germany innocuous by reducing it forcibly from her status as one of the principal industrial nations to that of a predominantly agricultural nation. It is by simple charity that we assume that the fathers of this policy of the extensive destruction of central European industry were simply ignorant and unaware of what they were doing, but even this charitable assumption implies the verdict of unforgivable irresponsibility. To slow down the industrialization of Germany had always been the dream of the

wildest types among the Prussian Junkers, but even they had not been wild enough to imagine that after she had become a desperately overpopulated country Germany could be turned back into a predominantly agricultural one or deprived of some of her principal industries. To out-Junker in this respect the Prussian Junkers, who had always had an intense dislike for industry, has been left to the men who have to bear the terrible responsibility for the Potsdam policies. After untold harm has been done and after all Europe depending on German industry has felt the consequences most painfully, everybody has come to realize that by one stroke of the pen and afterward by some carloads of dynamite you simply have not the right to destroy the conditions of life for tens of millions of people and to demolish one of the main pillars on which the whole structure of European economy rests. You can do this a hundred times less if at the same time the agriculture of these same people has become exhausted, if it needs more badly than ever the fertilizers, the farm machinery, and the tractors the production of which you want to make impossible by the destruction of chemical, steel, and machine industries, and if on top of all this you authorize some other nations to cram into this famine-stricken area as many millions of their own citizens as they want to get rid of because they do not like their hair and their language. Well, it has been tried. Everybody knows the result now; but perhaps only a few people outside of Germany can have any idea of the lack of sense with which this unfortunate policy has been carried through. I still remember the exasperation of the Swiss industrialist in Germany when he had just been rung up by the regional Allied commissioner and told that, in conformity with the Potsdam wrecking plan, he had to blow up his private electrical power plant of 400,000 kilowatts' capacity, while at the same time the neighboring peasants had to be prevented by severe penalties from using additional current necessary for running their threshing machines. At Hamburg and Kiel some of the most magnificent shipyards in the world, which could have been useful for replacing the ships sunk by the German submarines, have been demolished, and more often than not



no attempt has been made in such cases to sell at least abroad the machinery or materials of the doomed factories. If the Allies saw no other way of making Germany innocuous except by this wrecking policy, why not wait until they were to leave Germany and why not run in the meantime the factories, shipyards and power plants at full blast for the benefit of ruined Europe?

Let us illustrate this story of mistakes by another example and take the case of one single country, Bavaria. Perhaps nowhere in Germany were the conditions for a speedy political and economic reconstruction so propitious as in this section, which by race, outlook, economic and social structure, easy-going temperament, religion, anti-Prussian feeling, and other features has very much in common with Austria. Austria, which had sent the fateful piper Hitler to Germany together with most of the notions he had learned in Vienna and where there were at least as many Nazis as in Bavaria, has been "liberated," which is just and good. But Bavaria, where unfortunately the Nazis had made their headquarters and where they in company with full-blooded Prussians like General Ludendorff had been fishing in the troubled waters of Bavarian resentment against Berlin and its Red centralism—Bavaria has been "conquered." Even this might not have been so bad if her conqueror could have remained a man like General Patton with his sturdy common sense and soldierly honesty, or if she had been conquered by General Clark, who liberated Austria. But after the brief Patton episode Bavaria has been conquered by people who seem to have had the queer notion that what this country of Catholics, strong federalists, individualist peasants, loyal monarchists, and other ardent anti-Nazis needed most were Communists, Protestants, Freemasons, Prussianized centralists, and German emigrants steeped in the Morgenthau mentality.<sup>1</sup> While these types and ideas have been forced down the throats of the miserable Bavarians—just as after 1919 the equally strange people and ideas imported from Berlin and elsewhere were—they have been treated like particularly nasty children. If the Allies had done

<sup>1</sup> The reader might well bear in mind that the author is a Protestant and not a Catholic. Neither is he a Bavarian.

nothing whatever in Bavaria except to leave the Bavarians alone and free to try their own way, Bavaria would have recovered quicker than Austria and found a fairly satisfactory solution of her political, social, intellectual, and economic problems. It was very difficult indeed to make a mess of Bavaria. It could be done only by the greatest efforts of unenlightened interference. But if even this case of Bavaria has been so completely mismanaged, what can we expect in other parts of Germany?

We do not criticize in order to whitewash the Germans. On the contrary, we are still much less satisfied with them than with their conquerors. We are so hard on the latter, however, because, by their failure in Germany, they have given the former every possible excuse and made it increasingly difficult to answer their complaints. To re-educate the Germans—that is, to carry through the moral revolution of which we wrote in the preceding chapter—was always a forbidding task. We do not know whether the policy we recommended would have been successful. It is possible that even then many Germans might have reacted in a disappointing way to their country's ignominious downfall, and that their disquieting political confusion today may point to an incurable incapacity for political regeneration. All we can honestly say on this subject is that the experiment simply has not been made, and thus for those who failed to make that experiment and to use an opportunity that has been as brief as it has been unique in history to blame the Germans alone is ridiculous. In view of the present situation in Germany, the wonder is not that the Germans seem to be little impressed by the ways of the Allies. The miracle is rather that, in spite of the frightful conditions and in spite of faulty policies, they are certainly far from being a hopeless case. A large number of them realize that the crimes that have been committed in the name of Germany are so unspeakable and so colossal that the Allies can do lots of things before the Germans are entitled to talk back. But as time goes on it is very natural that these German will have an increasingly difficult stand. Let us not forget that exactly the fact that the experiment of a promising policy in Germany has not been tried gives, properly understood, some

ground for hope. For if the right policy had been followed and the situation had then been just as bad, it would indeed be hopeless.

That the experiment of a more rational policy for Germany was not made when all was in its favor means certainly that the first round has been lost. Nothing can bring back these first two years, in which the soul of the Germans could most easily have been formed. Questionnaires, dismissals, imprisonment, and banning of books are almost ludicrously inadequate measures to cope with the long-run problem of re-establishing Germany as a civilized nation and of unmaking that long political and moral development which culminated in Hitler and his gang. To name merely one important example: It is not sufficient to prevent the Germans from reading the wrong books. You must give them the right books, but next to nothing has been done in this field during all these two years. The Germans are starving for mental food to give them the new orientation they so sorely need after Nazism. But while the Communists are spreading their literature ungrudgingly throughout Germany, the western Allies have remained so far strangely inactive, without considering that in this unique situation the marginal utility of every imported book of the right kind is enormous. It is wrong to believe that radio, movies, newspapers, and lectures are able to replace the thoughtful book that the German will read line for line, think over carefully, read again and again, pass on to his friends, and discuss with them. This is only one aspect of the real task to be accomplished, and one where the solution is the simple matter of spending some odd thousands of dollars along with the other countless millions and thereby achieving wonders. Personally, I have received the most touching letters from Germans telling me how one of my own books that by private charity had found its way to Germany had put their whole thinking on the new track of a liberal philosophy. But one has the uneasy feeling that even in the administration of the western Allies there are influential persons who are doing everything to ban such books, either for sympathy with collectivism or for fear of displeasing the Russians.

## THE ECONOMIC DISASTER

Nowhere are the consequences of these failures of a so-called "hard" peace more tragic and obvious than in the economic field. After almost two years of Allied occupation, economic conditions in Germany tend to get worse rather than to improve, and Germany, which was expected to pay the victors, remains an almost bottomless pit for American and British money, required to keep on starvation rations the population of one of the leading industrial countries of the world. And these Germans are starving to a large extent in ruins, cellars, huts, or caves, while the others whose houses have been spared by the bombs have to share their rooms with the millions of eastern refugees who have been driven out from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, and other countries. Those who still live in a room of their own together with their family must expect any moment the dreaded knock on the door that tells them that within a few hours they have to leave everything to the occupying authorities and to wander off into the void. These people who in an appallingly large number are being fed and housed even below the Buchenwald level live in the bleak atmosphere of a country where the daily renewed business of keeping soul and body together is nearly the only distraction, where a pin or a shoestring is a royal gift, where every contact with the outside world is meticulously prohibited, and where most of the little amenities of life are gone; while diseases and epidemics are rampant. There is next to no fuel in winter and almost no light. There is almost no soap to keep the body clean and protect it against skin diseases. More damaged houses are collapsing than are being repaired or new ones built. German industry is running at 10, 15, 20, or, in exceptional cases, 30 or more per cent of the productive capacity that has been left after the bombardments and the destructive policies of Potsdam. German money has become a joke. Its internal value is vanishing rapidly in spite of frantic efforts to keep up the fiction of low official prices.

Such are the basic conditions of life in Germany after almost

two years of occupation. They are bad beyond description and certainly against any reasonable expectation. Nor can we argue any more with smug complacency that in this respect the Germans are still reaping the fruits of Nazi policy. This theory hopelessly founders on the fact that the Nazis, while responsible for the terrible state in which they left Germany, can hardly be blamed for the fact that this state is in many respects much worse now than it was in 1945 or for the further fact that the means of production that are even now still available are being used only at a fraction of their capacity. The Allies cannot escape the very hard judgment that they have proved unable so far to cope successfully with the economic anarchy that the Nazis left.

The present economic paralysis of Germany is not only a real catastrophe for her alone, but one for all Europe as well. One may go even as far as to say that there is hardly any more gripping world economic problem today than that of withering Germany. Misery and starvation of a nation of seventy millions is never a light affair, but here we have to do with one of the leading industrial countries of the world, one that has been the center of the economic structure of Europe. Now we know everywhere in Europe what it means to wipe out this economic potential of Germany. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that not only politically but also economically it is true, as the *New York Herald Tribune* said in an editorial of January 3, 1947, that "the German problem is the European problem, and the European problem is the world problem."

As Mr. Hoover says in his remarkable report on the economic recovery of Germany and Austria, made public in the spring of the same year: "There is only one path to recovery in Europe. That is production. The whole economy of Europe is interlinked with German economy through the exchange of raw materials and manufactured goods. The production of Europe cannot be restored without the restoration of Germany as a contributor to that productivity." Criticizing the previous agreement signed by the four occupying powers in March 1947, Mr. Hoover goes on to say: "This agreement was a compromise

between the drastic terms proposed by Russia and France and the more liberal terms proposed by the other two nations. One major theme of this level of industry concept is to destroy Germany's war potential. Under this concept certain industries are to be blown up or prohibited, others are to be limited as to production. The emphasis was placed upon the limitation of 'heavy industry' with the view that Germany could export enough goods from 'light industry' to buy her foodstuffs and necessary raw materials." He describes as an "illusion" the assumption "that the 'light industry' in Germany can be expanded to a point where she will be able to pay for her imports. In my view, it cannot be done for years, and even then it is doubtful in the face of competition with the 'light industries' of other parts of the world." He then points out: "From the standpoint of other nations, the expansion of 'light industry' to a point of self-support for Germany will, by competition, injure these industries in the rest of Europe. On the other hand, the products of 'heavy industry' are Europe's first necessity for recovery." Mr. Hoover said that if Germany's heavy industries "are allowed to function, she has an ability to export and would become an asset in Europe's recovery." On the other hand, he continued, "To persist in the present policies will create, sooner or later, a cesspool of unemployment or pauper labor in the center of Europe which is bound to infect her neighbors."

Indeed, the repercussions of this gigantic disaster are being felt everywhere in Europe, and felt most intensely. Switzerland is going through a dangerous economic and social revolution; Holland finds she is deprived of her hinterland and of the main customer for her magnificent harbors, and everywhere the lack of the Ruhr coal makes an immeasurable difference. But it would be folly to expect regular coal deliveries from a Germany whose economy is otherwise sick to the core. And that is exactly what it still is now after almost two years of occupation.

But why the alarming paralysis of German economy? That is a most puzzling question for the economic diagnostician. Is it that the Germans are lacking in initiative and resourcefulness? Everybody knows that, however numerous their shortcomings,

laziness is not among them; and it can even be said that they and the world might be better off today had they been less feverishly active in the past. Is the cause of the economic disease in Germany to be sought in the loss of industrial equipment brought about by the war and by the measures undertaken by the Allies in fulfillment of the Potsdam agreement? To be sure, all these destructions and prohibitions count for a good deal, especially as they affect certain key industries like the chemical industry, electrical industry, power plants, and shipping. Moreover, the threat of future destruction and the absolute limitation of the most important industries by the Four Power agreement of March 1946 exert an unfavorable psychological influence on the German entrepreneurs. The fact remains, however, that actual production in Germany persists in remaining much below even this reduced capacity. Germany is, owing to her war losses and the millions of men still being kept as so-called prisoners of war, terribly short of manpower, and her alleged "overpopulation," which some want to alleviate by organized German mass emigration, consists in reality in an excess of women, children, old people, and invalids, and in an appalling shortage of able-bodied men. And yet millions of these are unemployed, underemployed, or wrongly employed. That is the real paradox we have to explain. Is it then the economic dismemberment of Germany by division into four zones of occupation that is to blame for all her misery? This seems to be the generally accepted theory today. I am far from denying its essential truth, but it may lead to dangerous illusions unless we give it a more precise meaning than the one usually implied.

Without judging the obviously disastrous consequences of the economic dismemberment of Germany any differently from most competent observers, I am convinced that the trouble lies much deeper than that. I believe that the notorious absurdities of the zonal division, which led to the sensible merger of the British and American zones, are merely part of a more general development of economic life in Germany. This development amounts to a most serious disturbance of the whole economic process in that country, which has been deprived to a large

extent of those incentives and regulative forces that guarantee an orderly economic life. That is why the economic catastrophe in Germany must be of general interest to every economist—just as a “beautiful cancer” must be to any physician. The economic problem of Germany is not merely a problem of administration. It is the problem of the general conditions of economic order and therefore not dissimilar from a problem that presents itself today in milder forms in many other countries of Europe.

In order to see my point it must be remembered that there are two ways of building a house. In fact—incredible as this may seem today to many people—a house may come into existence because of a speculator finding it profitable to risk his capital in this venture, because of workers finding it profitable to work at certain wages, because of people finding it profitable to give their savings for mortgages at a certain rate of interest, and finally because of other people finding it profitable to rent rooms at certain rates of rent. On the other hand, a house may be built by order of the government, which “apportions” the necessary raw materials, which gives—in the shape of subsidies or cheap credits—money wrung from the community by taxes, loans, or inflation, which “directs” the necessary labor force, and which finally “distributes” the dwelling space according to some more or less reasonable system of priority. I am convinced that the first method—which illustrates that economic order which we call market economy—is generally superior to the second, which illustrates the collectivist economic order. But even if we are less sure of this, we must make up our minds as to which course we want to follow. If we make one unworkable we must be sure that the other will work. If we destroy the economic order of free markets we must prove that we can attain an orderly economic process at least just as well by government command.

Now, in order to understand the present economic situation in Germany we must realize that here we have exactly this midway muddle of a decayed market economy whose functions cannot be—or at any rate have not been—taken over by a



collectivist economy. The consequence is that there is very little left of any economic order at all. In consequence, German economic life has to a distressing degree become a miserable sum total of primitive barter transactions, with cigarettes taking the place of the proverbial glass beads of the old African trade. And now we understand why production figures are much below the level still possible after the war destructions and the Potsdam policies.

Only very few people seem to realize as yet that in all this the Allies are continuing the Nazi tradition, even to the point of using the whole jargon of their economic policy and speaking in the German equivalents of "apportioning," "directing," "controlling," and "priorities." Under the alluring name of "full employment" the Third Reich began a policy that subsequently destroyed step by step the economic order of free markets, until finally there emerged a collectivist order that in its essentials was not very different from the Russian. It is a great misfortune that for a while the Nazis seemed to make this system an impressive success, which gave it a prestige the world over that still persists. Indeed, it is a curious fact that everywhere socialists, planners, and champions of "economic control," whether they realize it or not, are still drawing on the Nazi model. That has obviously been one of the reasons why the Allies, when taking Germany into their custody, did not hesitate to adopt the whole formidable machinery of Nazi collectivism with all its principles and notions. Up to the present, it does not seem to have occurred to anybody that "denazification" is at least just as urgent in the sphere of economic policy as in any other sphere.

It is high time, however, to recognize the fact that already under the Nazi regime the collectivist economic system had increasingly succumbed to the forces of disorder and disintegration inherent in such a system, and that when the Allies took command it was in a state of unmistakable dissolution. It was bound to go to pieces altogether when, after the defeat, the central authority disappeared, together with its formidable apparatus of coercion and propaganda, and when, on top of

this, the breakdown of Germany presented new and gigantic problems that could have been solved only by the most active and elastic economic system—that is, by the exact opposite of a collectivist system.

Long before the ghastly end, the most competent observers in Germany had seen more clearly than the outside world that the collectivist system of the Third Reich had got itself into an impasse, leaving no option but a resolute return to an economic order based on free markets and private initiative. But now the consequences of defeat have turned the mere impasse into chaos and decay. If we want to define the present pathological state of the German economy, the nearest approximation to the truth seems to be that what we are witnessing today is the Nazi collectivist system *in articulo mortis*.

This process cannot be wholly understood without due regard to what happened to the German money. Nazi collectivism could not have been carried through without a gigantic inflation of a peculiar kind that is another of those dubious inventions in economic policy that Hitler and Schacht bequeathed to our present world. Instead of the "open inflation" with which we had become familiar after the First World War, we now got the new type of "repressed inflation."<sup>2</sup> In this system the whole frightful tyranny of a totalitarian government made it possible for a long while recklessly to increase the volume of money and yet to make this inflation almost invisible by the collectivist method of a most rigid control of prices, wages, investments, and exchanges. In this way collectivism and inflation became intertwined: inflation made possible the waste and disorder of collectivism, and collectivism made it possible to have inflation without runaway prices, wages, and exchange rates.

However, this "repressed" inflation—the now so fashionable combination of the inflationary upward pressure of prices, costs, and exchange rates and the downward pressure of collectivist economic control—could never, at best, have been anything but

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed analysis see W. Röpke, "Offene und zurückgestaute Inflation," *Kyklos, International Review for Social Sciences* (Bern), 1947, I.

a temporary device. In this competition of the upward pressure of inflation and the downward pressure of economic tyranny the former was bound to win in the end. Long before that bitter end of "repressed" inflation, however, the inevitably arbitrary fixing of prices, wages, and exchange rates caused a progressive distortion of the whole economic process, a distortion that is nothing but the gradual disintegration of economy brought about by collectivism. This means that, under the impact of "repressed" inflation much sooner than under that of "open" inflation, money loses its functions of directing and harmonizing the economic process and equipping it with the necessary incentives to ensure maximum production of the right kind of goods.

Millions of Germans are doing things they would not do if they had a reasonable choice. The plumber or textile worker, let us say, is spending his days in bringing home in overcrowded trains some miserable potatoes or cabbages instead of repairing houses or weaving cloth and buying with his earnings those potatoes and cabbages on the regular markets. Others are doing all sorts of odd jobs, trafficking in cigarettes or other objects of the black markets, selling some bric-a-brac, filling out questionnaires, making applications, hanging around offices, standing somewhere in a long queue, or doing anything to earn the few marks necessary for paying the nominal rent.

Now it is obvious that, just as people cannot live from taking in each other's washing, they cannot do so by selling cigarettes to each other, lecturing each other, or pushing carts for each other. A nation lives by some part of the population producing food and by another part producing industrial goods and services that are exchanged against food coming from the country's own agriculture or from abroad. That is the normal mechanism of the national economy of an advanced industrial country. The fact is, however, that in Germany this mechanism does not work any more and achieves only a fraction of what would still be possible even today after so many destructions. The rest is charity, administration, forms, and questionnaires.

Let us take a simple but typical case. Here is a textile factory somewhere in Germany that has been permitted to work up some of its stock of raw materials. By producing, however, the manufacturer is losing all the time, because the prices are so fixed that he cannot cover his costs. That is not to say that it is wages that are responsible. On the contrary, these too are fixed at such a low rate that they are hardly an equivalent for the wear and tear of the worker's shoes and clothes. This manufacturer, indeed, told me that he was thoroughly ashamed to pay such a scandalously low wage and to be unable to do anything about it. The authorities fixing prices and wages know, of course, that they are fictitious; but they do not dare to allow the necessary adjustments, for fear of starting the avalanche of inflation. But let us look further into this very curious business as I studied it during my trip through Germany. The daily wage the manufacturer was compelled to pay was five marks, but we have to note that the whole monthly food ration in that district was worth about eighteen marks. If we add the rent, which is equally ridiculous, and some other things to be had at the fictitious prices of the "official sector," we see that the worker can use only a small part of his earnings at prices that are just as fictitiously low as his wage, while the rest of his earnings must be spent outside of this "official sector" where it is next to worthless. In order to be able to buy the food ration and the other paltry things of the "white markets" it simply does not pay to work in our textile factory, to exhaust what is left of your physical force, and to wear off your clothes. If you sell some cigarettes on the black market or do any odd job you are much wiser, unless you can live on small savings or sell a china cup from your cupboard.

It is a mystery—not least to the managers I spoke with in Germany—that under these circumstances there are still workers to be found, and an even greater mystery that they work with anything like normal intensity. Small wonder that even the thrifty German comes to the conclusion that the game just is not worth the candle. That is true of the worker, and it is also true of the German farmer. How can you expect top deliveries

from a farmer who has to pay more for the sack than for the wheat it contains? Since we cannot place a policeman behind every farmer, the inevitable result is that deliveries of German agriculture are falling off. The miracle is that nevertheless they are still so high.

As a further consequence of "repressed" inflation, the Reichsmark lost its relation to the international system of values. Thanks to the long working of exchange control and all the other paraphernalia of autarchy (which so many other countries are now so eager to copy), you cannot tell what a mark is really worth in cents, pennies, or centimes; and there is simply no possibility of calculating any true rate of exchange, a mathematical feat of which only a free exchange market would be capable. Thanks to collectivism, the Reichsmark has gone the way of the ruble, and all official rates of the Reichsmark remind us of the arbitrary way in which Roosevelt, as Morgenthau has told us recently, used to settle the gold price over the breakfast table.

Here in the field of money, it is necessary once again to understand the present state of things as the final stage of a long and hideous story. For what has happened in Germany is the almost complete breakdown of the whole elaborate and admired system of "repressed" inflation. Pathetic efforts are still being made to keep up the "official" system of prices, wages, rents, and exchange rates, and to ward off the avalanche of "open" inflation; but all these figures are so utterly "wrong" that they fail completely to harmonize and animate production and exchange. It simply does not pay to work at the official wage or to sell agricultural products at the official price, so black markets have become a necessity in Germany. But the responsible authorities do not dare to let the handle of repression go, for fear of "open" inflation. They prefer to go on "controlling," "fixing," "directing," "licensing," "apportioning," "distributing," filling the deficit of production somewhat out of their own pockets and reducing as best they can the appalling misery that still remains and that is even increasing every day.

Now we are able to say precisely what is wrong with the

zonal division in Germany. It is essential to realize that such a decentralized system of occupation might have been of little economic consequence if we had still in Germany a kind of economic order that did not make economic life dependent on the yes or no of the administration. But instead of such a market economy, which is essentially "unpolitical," the Allies found in Germany a highly developed collectivist system, and they adopted this while at the same time they split up the political authority on which such an economic system entirely depends. Under such an economic system you are bound to have as many national economies as you have different administrations commanding the economic life. Now we have in Germany not only a British, American, French, and Russian "national economy," but to some extent even a Bavarian, Hessian, and what not—not because there are so many different governments, but because there is an economic system that makes economic life dependent on them.

The division of Germany into different zones of occupation would have been bad enough in any case, but it has led to a real catastrophe because it has been grafted on a collectivist economic system. Rarely has the disintegrating force of collectivism been so cruelly revealed as in the case of Germany, where we see that under such a system economic integration cannot reach further than the word of the directing, commanding, or forbidding authority. It means tyranny within and separation without. It is a real tragedy that those responsible for the arrangements in central Europe seem to have had no idea of what collectivism means. They cannot have realized that the extent of the Russian zone in Germany would necessarily mean that a completely intolerant economic and social system of its own would extend its reach, like a menacing dagger, far into western Europe. They cannot possibly have been aware that by this zone Germany, i.e. central Europe, would be forcibly torn into two inconsistent parts. They cannot clearly have taken into account that to divide Germany into separate zones of occupation *and* to commit oneself to a collectivist economic system would necessarily result in a dismember-

ment of the national economy such as the country has not seen since the earliest Middle Ages. Of all this the responsible people must have been blissfully ignorant, or the fatal decisions reached at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam would be incomprehensible. But it seems unpardonable that one did not know all this or listen to those who knew. Anyway, it is utterly inexcusable not to know *now* what collectivism implies and to draw the obvious conclusions for making an end of the economic mess in Germany. We shall see in the next section what these conclusions are.

#### THE DANGER OF COMMUNISM IN GERMANY

It is indeed common knowledge today that—in contrast to what the enlightened single administration of the Americans has done in Japan—the joint administration of Germany by the four principal victors has been so far a disastrous failure. It is to be assumed that the majority of informed people will also agree as to the principal reasons that we have given for this failure. The situation in Germany is no less alarming because, contrary to earlier pessimistic prophecies, this country in its misery, proletarianization, and despair not only has failed so far to become an easy prey of communism, but has proved, together with Austria, to be one of the European countries most resistant to communism. Where free elections have been held in Germany, the Communists invariably remained a small minority, a fact that makes the numerous Communists who have been placed in responsible positions by the Allies look rather silly. To some extent this imperviousness of the Germans to the Communist propaganda, which almost everywhere else has been so disastrously successful, may be the natural and wholesome reaction of people who, by their terrible experience of National Socialism, are so much ahead of other nations in recognizing totalitarianism under every disguise and hating it intensely. Of at least equal importance is the fact that the Russians in Germany have done everything to justify this aversion and still are doing so, with the effect that only the very riffraff among the Germans have remained really faithful to communism in the Russian zone.

When given a choice, the vast majority of the Germans would still prefer the west to the east, and the result of the last elections in the Russian zone, which were held, at least outside of Berlin, under the old familiar terror, cannot be interpreted but as a clear choice of the occident. But in so far as this reflects in any way the judgment of the Germans on the relative merits of the eastern or the western powers, it should be taken as proof of an appraisal of the demerits of the former rather than of the merits of the latter. If the Germans after this most obvious failure of the western occupation still prefer it to the eastern, it only shows how simply terrible the latter must be and how great the faith the Germans still have in the western powers. The Germans cannot help believing that the western powers will not tolerate the present conditions any longer once they know all the facts and once they have seen that it has all been a great mistake; whereas, in the case of the Russians, the Germans, whatever they may think of the good nature of individuals, know from bitter experience that they have to do with a system whose very essence is callousness, serfdom, and the negation of elementary rights and liberties.

It would be a grave illusion, however, to suppose that the western powers could count indefinitely on this obliging disposition of the Germans and base their policy on the complacent surmise that whatever they do, the Germans will not become naughty. The western Allies cannot live forever on the rapidly shrinking capital of confidence they enjoy, or even on the lavish capital of Russian mistakes in handling the Germans. The present relative calm in internal German politics, moreover, may prove very treacherous. We had better face the unpleasant fact that the Germans would not be human if under these fearful conditions they did not store up an enormous amount of resentment, irritation, bitterness, and hatred of everybody and everything. For the time being these poisonous sentiments are yet vague, ill defined, and without direction; but the level of steaming passions is rising all the time. If nothing happens in the meantime, a radical reaction on the part of the Germans is bound to occur sooner or later, and the most probable form of



such a reaction still appears some sort of communism, very possibly combined with an intense nationalism. Especially among the anti-Nazis who, taken in by the war propaganda of the B.B.C., had greeted the western Allies as real liberators, the disappointment, not to say despair, is so intense that if they were given some little hope by the Russians they might still succumb to communism. So much frustration of hopes and predilections cannot simply pass without leaving deep traces.

## WHAT CAN AND MUST BE DONE NOW

**A**FTER these first years of errors and fumbling experiments in Germany of which we gave a pitiless account in the preceding chapter, the first ray of hope seemed the now famous speech that Mr. Byrnes, then American Secretary of State, gave at Stuttgart in the fall of 1946. This speech was received with all the greater relief as it was quickly followed by the courageous speech of Mr. Churchill at Zurich, where he plainly stated the need of a really constructive policy in central and western Europe. Then followed negotiations that finally ended in the formal merger of the American and British zones in Germany.

But the results of all this have been utterly disappointing. The winter of 1946-47 was perhaps the worst in all German history. Instead of improving, things in Germany have gone from bad to worse, and if nothing very drastic is done without delay the course to disaster will become a headlong chase. The political reactions of the Germans themselves in their extreme misery have become unpredictable. At the moment when these lines are being written all attention is being focussed on the Moscow conference, among the chief purposes of which are the preparation of a peace treaty with Germany and the ending of dissensions between the Allies with regard to that country. There is very little reason, however, to be happy about this. "Peace with Germany" are beautiful words, but, as we shall see and as we fear the outcome of the conference will prove, they have little sense in this special case. There is danger that the responsible statesmen, because they do not know what to do or are afraid or unable to do what they know they ought to do,

will again pay themselves merely in words or continue their policy of make-believes. It is to be feared that the reader of the present book will have to admit that the author was right when predicting that this conference would be an immense red herring drawn across the track of present world politics, and that in this way most precious time would be lost. Even if the worst should not happen and the western Allies not fall into the traps cleverly laid by the Russians, the conference will have the consequence that things will be left undone that actually suffer no longer delay.

More important, indeed, than any peace treaty with Germany—which, at best, will take a long time—are a number of immediate reforms that could be carried through by the American and British authorities at once and without any formal peace treaty. There are four of such reforms.

#### ECONOMIC REFORM

The first is the *economic reform*. It is the most urgent not only because general misery has reached the point where only the most desperate measures can save an industrial nation of seventy millions in the very center of Europe from an unspeakable catastrophe; it is equally urgent because the cost of rescuing the German economy and winding it up again increases all the time in a geometrical progression. If you do not repair the leaky roof in time, the rains will ruin everything, and the longer you wait, the more you will have to repair. This is just one of the numerous examples for the vicious circle in which all things are moving in Germany. The longer you let the Germans starve at the present rations, the quicker their physical capacity is falling. The longer you let the machines rot, the sooner they will become altogether useless. The longer the German industries are permitted to use up their stocks of raw materials without being able to replace them, the more desperate the situation threatens to become when the last stocks are gone. The longer you let the productive capacity of Germany go to waste, the more hopeless becomes the task of setting it in motion again, because in the end you no longer have a hammer or a nail to

drive in, or an electric bulb to light you. Now after almost two years of occupation these are already the conditions to be found almost everywhere even in western Germany, to say nothing of the Russian zone, which has been literally stripped bare.

German economy might be said to suffer from a case of pernicious anemia, so pernicious indeed that, without consulting their sympathies for the Germans, the Allies had to apply the indispensable and lifesaving practice of blood transfusion; i.e., they had to fill somewhat the enormous deficit of German production by unpaid imports to Germany. This "paying of reparations to Germany" looks highly paradoxical, and it must be most irritating to the American and British taxpayer. But this taxpayer has to realize that by "paying reparations to Germany" he is simply paying for the dire consequences of the destructionist and prohibitionist policies of the Allies in Germany. Irritating as it is for the Allied taxpayer to pay for these imports, it must be no less so for the German to be prevented from helping himself by using to the full the productive capacity of his native territory, and then to receive as a slight compensation alms for which he is expected to be duly grateful. The cause of irritation is the same in both cases: the carefully contrived deficit of German production, which persists in remaining far below even that capacity which has been left after all war and postwar destructions. The Allied taxpayer and the German have a joint interest in removing this common cause of irritation at once.

In the preceding chapter we already had occasion to analyze this cause of the paralysis of German production. There we saw also that it is a superficial and oversimplified view of the matter to place sole responsibility on the division of Germany into different zones, and to expect accordingly a quick and miraculous cure from a removal of this division. This view is also extremely dangerous, especially in connection with the present conference in Moscow. For the actual situation is that, after the formal merger of the American and British zones, and if we ignore for the moment the question of the prospects of a further merger with the French zone, the whole problem of the unification of the German economy simply boils down to this:

Will the Russians remove their western barriers or not? Therefore, the problem of the zonal unification in Germany has now become a part of the whole West-East problem. The danger is obvious, however, that if we believe the removal of the Russian demarcation line to mean the end of all our troubles in Germany, we may be prepared to pay almost any price for it. That is exactly what the Russians want the western Allies to do, and that is also why the former are so much interested in furthering this superstitious faith in the wonders to be expected from the Russians' gracefully lifting their western barrier.

In order to see quite clearly on this point we make the not too unreasonable assumption that the three western zones have become one "national economy," and we now ask what the addition of the Russian zone would mean. Would it improve conditions in western Germany? To believe this would indeed involve a serious fallacy. The principal idea seems to be always that most of the food troubles of western Germany would be over if the former deliveries from the east could be restored. But these "deliveries" always have meant and still will mean that western Germany has to pay for the eastern foodstuffs, no matter whether both regions have the same currency or are "foreign countries" for each other. It is always essentially an exchange of western industrial goods against eastern agricultural goods. If western Germany is enabled again to produce those industrial goods, she will earn the wherewithal to buy the necessary foodstuffs wherever she wants, whether in eastern Germany or elsewhere. The trouble of western Germany is that today she is not producing those industrial goods, not, however, that she is prevented from exchanging them against eastern foodstuffs. But that is not all. The further trouble is not only that western Germany is not producing the industrial goods, but also that eastern Germany is not producing the agricultural goods. So the simple addition of the Russian zone to the "national economy" of western Germany will and can work no wonders, because before you can exchange agricultural goods for industrial ones you must produce them. The hideous truth is that if the Russians are prepared at all to consider a unification of eco-

conomic administration, they do so because the conditions in their zone are so much worse than in western Germany that they hope to be retrieved by the merger out of an impasse that they have created in their zone by their policy of "taking the seed corn." That means, on the other hand, that by such a merger conditions in western Germany would be impaired, not improved, and that the Allied taxpayer, having paid for the mistakes of his own statesmen, now would have to foot the bills of Russian follies too. We shall have to take off our hats in due admiration of the Russians if they really succeed in making this transaction appear as an exceptional favor on their part for which they have to be paid handsomely. But we believe that the western Allies will not fail to see that this would be driving the joke a bit too far. If anybody is to be entitled to demand a price, it is surely they and not the Russians, and the least they could ask for such a sacrifice is that the Russians withdraw from Thuringia and Saxony to the Elbe line, which was fixed originally as the line of demarcation.

Now it should have become clear that the really important thing is not to unify the western zones with the Russian zone, but to make the western zones—of which the main parts are already unified—economically a going concern again by increasing both agricultural and industrial production and by overcoming the present paralysis of the whole economic process. Once this has been done there will no longer be any food problem for western Germany, as we have seen. If the Russians are ready to exchange agricultural products of their zone for industrial products of western Germany, they are welcome. If they are not, there are enough foodstuffs in the world to be exchanged for German industrial goods. The thing is to produce them. But that is a task that entirely depends on the western Allies. On the other hand, it is *complete mysticism to believe that the food troubles in Germany will be dispelled at once when a district that formerly had a highly prosperous agriculture is reunited with another district that formerly had a highly prosperous industry*. In both cases, the prosperity ought to be restored as quickly as possible for the greater good of the whole of Europe,

but unless they obtain complete control of the Russian zone the western Allies can be made responsible only for the restoration of the prosperity of their own zones. It goes without saying that we cannot leave eastern Germany forever to her grim fate, but that is not the point at issue here. The point is whether unification with the Russian zone is indispensable for western Germany in her present economic troubles. Our answer to this is: Most certainly not.

After the whole world has become accustomed to gaze transfixedly on the "Iron Curtain," anxiously waiting for its removal and ready to pay almost any price for such an obliging Russian act, it is high time to return to realities. The economic headaches of the Allies in Germany cannot be removed by a unification with the Russian zone, but only by making their own zones a going concern. The former might be very simple if you behave as the Russians ask you; the latter is difficult, but it is the only way. On the other hand, there is, as we said, this great advantage, that there is no need to wait for the eventual outcome of any peace conference.

Surely, the barbarous economic dismemberment of Germany must be brought to an end by the merger of the different zones. But we must not forget two things. The first is that now that the American and British zones have already been combined, and since the French may be hoped to join sooner or later, the whole problem boils down to the question whether and under what conditions a merger with the Russian zone is feasible. We believe that it can be envisaged by the western Allies only under conditions that would be tantamount to a practical retreat of the Russians from Germany, but we are further convinced that even then the Russian zone, which has been ruined beyond description, would in the beginning be a heavy liability rather than an asset. The second point we must bear in mind is this: Since the evil is not simply one of mere geography, but one of the economic system, the results of any administrative reform like that of the merger of zones will be disappointing unless this is accompanied by a radical reform of the present economic system in Germany.

The prerequisite of a return to economic sanity in Germany is the *radical reform of the German money system*. This reform must restore the mark as the true measure of values, as the trusted means of exchange, and therefore as the agent that harmonizes and integrates the economic process. To this end, the "repressed" inflation must be stopped by two measures at the same time, the one hitting at repression, the other at inflation; first, by mopping up the surplus purchasing power slowly submerging all sectors of German economic life in spite of all repressive controls, and secondly, by dismantling the formidable apparatus of economic repression. In other words, the monetary reform in Germany must be more than just that; it must be combined with a thorough economic reform. There would be little sense in making an end of the "repressed" inflation if we were to retain the strangling devices of economic repression and to go on "directing," "controlling," "licensing," "prohibiting," and what not. Though all of these devices cannot be thrown overboard at once, the aim must be to set the paralyzed German economy in motion and to replace the economic fictions by realities. This supposes the restoration of an essentially free market economy, which would make it possible to learn once again the real value of things and which would release the dormant forces of production in Germany. It goes without saying that it would be entirely futile to start the whole program of economic recovery if the nefarious policies of industrial destruction and disorderly reparations—of the "take the seed corn" type—were not stopped.

Germany is the only country in the world today that has a paper currency but no authority or central bank regulating it. There is no Reichsbank any more. Nobody knows the amount of the note circulation; nobody knows, or is able to control, the use made by the Russians of the note clichés that the Americans have handed over to them; nobody even seems to know where the note clichés of the Reichsbank are. But everybody knows that the pressure of this unknown and uncontrollable amount of paper money on prices and costs is rising relentlessly and that the pathetic efforts of repression will remain futile while suffo-



cating economic life. Whatever we may think of the Germans, common decency and a mere sense of order demand that we make an end of this ghastly mess.

To that end we need a central money and credit authority to carry through the monetary reform and to control the German money and credit system. Leaving aside once more all the complicated details, we realize that here the question of zones becomes of the utmost importance. It is obvious that the area over which the new money and credit authority has command will determine the extent of what we might call the "national economy" of Germany. This area ought to cover the whole of Germany, but in view of the enormous difficulties presented by the Russian zone, and also in view of the utmost urgency of reform, we propose the "*nuclear*" approach, which consists in the American and British authorities' declaring without delay their intention to carry through the monetary, financial, and economic reform within their combined zones and inviting the Russians and French to join them if they want to partake in the advantages of this nucleus of industrial prosperity instead of pursuing their present course. To join this sphere of the "*Westmark*" (as we might call the new currency unit, against which the present Reichsmark could be exchanged at a rate of, let us say, 100:1) would not be a mere matter of political expediency. It would mean complete acceptance of the principles of economic order on which this sphere would and must be based, principles that might be defined as the very opposite of everything the Russian economic system stands for. They are the principles of which the United States is today the main rampart in the world, though unfortunately not yet in its own zone in Germany.

Furthermore, it would mean that the Russians must give up any ambitious policy of incorporating the Russian zone of Germany in their bloc of countries or to infiltrate, in their wily way, even into western Germany. There must not be any "controlling boards," or anything of this sort in western Germany that would give the Russians the foothold they so ardently desire. If the Russians accept all these conditions, well and good. If not, no

time ought to be lost in starting the reform, which would then become the national economy of the *West German Federation*. If anybody doubts whether it would have any chance to live, let him remember the smaller example of Belgium. It is indeed such a sort of larger Belgium that this West German Federation might become, that is to say, a country depending for the livelihood of its inhabitants on the exports of a highly developed industry, besides a most intensified small-scale agriculture, and one that, because it is so absolutely dependent on international trade, will be forced more surely than by all the follies of the Potsdam policy to behave peacefully. Much as it must be our aim to extend this "nucleus" beyond the eastern demarcation line, we must never forget two things: first, that it would be suicide to agree on such an extension except on conditions that amount to the practical retreat of the Russians, and secondly, that the situation in the western zones has become so desperate that not a single day must be lost in saving at least these from an unspeakable catastrophe.

This cannot be more than a mere outline of the necessary economic reform in Germany, which, if the Russians against all probability should surrender to the western Allies, can be carried through all over Germany, and of which, otherwise, a beginning ought to be made at once in the western zones. While on this occasion we can hardly do more than state the main principles involved, we should like to make at least some supplementary remarks.

Our first point is that an indispensable prerequisite of any economic recovery in Germany is that policy which we compared to blood transfusion in a case of pernicious anemia, and which has been practiced so far. After Germany has been allowed to get into this vicious circle of underproduction and diminished productive capacity and now to become completely exhausted, recovery without the largest possible help from outside seems impossible, and the longer we wait and try to get around this conclusion, the higher the cost of recovery will mount. But instead of the present giving of alms that are too much for the Allied taxpayer and too little for the starving German, the

help should now be put on a sound commercial basis. It should take the form of *credits and investments* given with the view of making Germany a going concern instead of alms, grudgingly given and peevishly received. In order for this to be achieved, the help must first be ample, like any blood transfusion that is to restore the patient's health; an amount just sufficient to prolong the agony is a sheer waste. The other condition is that the help should be given as part of a comprehensive, intelligent, and energetic policy of economic reform. Under these conditions, investments in western Germany will be as sound and profitable as any that can be made in this present anarchic world. A well-administered, prosperous, and industrious Germany opposed to revolutionary experiments and respecting elementary rights and liberties might become a welcome oasis.

As a second point we want to stress that the restoration of economic freedom—which, as we saw, is the only way of restoring order and productivity in German economic life—seems nowhere more necessary than in the field of *foreign trade*, on whose rapid development everything else hinges. Most people agree today that without the fullest development of German foreign trade Germany will remain a heavy liability for the Allies. But do they all realize that this cannot be expected from planning committees, but only from the subtle and intelligent work of the private businessman, who must be allowed to enter into immediate contact with the foreign markets and patiently explore his opportunities? If that is extremely doubtful, still fewer people, outside a small well-informed circle, will have grasped the urgent necessity of making an end of German autarchy—this inveterate evil of the German economy for about fifteen years—by re-establishing a free exchange market as the only sound basis of foreign trade. Only by a free exchange market for the German mark will it be possible to have exchange rates that correspond to the real parities as expressed by the purchasing power of the mark relative to that of the other main currencies. On the other hand, such a return to normal conditions in German foreign trade and in the exchange markets in Germany will, under present conditions, be hardly conceivable

without the transitional help of foreign credits, whose importance has already been stressed under another aspect. We repeat that such foreign credits suppose among other things that, at least in that part of Germany where the western Allies can carry through the program of economic reform, we can rely again on the solid rock of legal security, guaranteed property, stable currency conditions, orderly public finance, and economic-political order. But it is largely up to the western Allies themselves whether those conditions will be fulfilled.

We want to show still another aspect of this extremely important subject. Recently it has been authoritatively stated that today in Germany the British administration, which is exporting coal in order to buy Canadian wheat, gets about one metric ton of wheat for four tons of coal, whereas for this same quantity of coal one could get indirectly sixteen tons of wheat if the German chemical industry were allowed to turn it into nitrogen for German agriculture. The actual case is that the destruction of the main nitrogen plant in the British zone is still pending! It would be difficult to find a better illustration of the policies that make it absolutely inevitable that the western Allies can keep millions of Germans from death by starvation only by pouring permanently into this slum their unhappy taxpayers' money. Our example has the further merit of making it clear that no real economic reform in Germany will be possible before the Potsdam policies of reparations and industrial destruction have been replaced by more rational policies. As far as *reparations* are concerned, we may have recourse once more to our medical simile and say that it would hardly be rational to pump blood out of a mortally anemic person when at the same time we are trying desperately to keep him alive by blood transfusion. But that is exactly what the victors are doing today in Germany. The time has certainly come to point out that it would be better to postpone the pumping until the body of the German economy has regained its power of producing blood cells, that is to say, to stop reparations until we have the mortal sickness of the German economy fairly under control. As for the *destruction of German industries* for the purpose of making Germany innocu-

ous, it would seem wise to stop now all further demolishing, since as long as the Allies stay in Germany, there is certainly no hurry to do anything rash. In the meantime, they can safely watch the eventual effects of judicious policies in the political, social, and moral reconditioning of Germany. There is equally little sense in fixing the maximum production of the main German industries, i.e., the "level of industry" concept, which Mr. Hoover in his report on his economic mission to Germany and Austria of March 18, 1947, has rightly torn into shreds. For either the Allies mean to stay in Germany, and then this absolute limitation is not only ludicrously unnecessary but positively harmful to their own policy, or they do not mean to stay in Germany, and then it would become impossible to make any limitation effectual. It would then indeed be easier to watch a sackful of fleas than to enforce such a policy.

Let us remember again that Germany must be made neither a menace nor a burden to her neighbors. When the problem is stated in this way it becomes at once clear that the destruction of industries and the limitation of production is an entirely unintelligent means for the economic disarmament of Germany. In comparison with this, the French proposal to detach the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial region from Germany offers certain advantages, since it would permit the German industries to be left intact, while the economic disarmament of Germany would be secured by bringing the remainder of Germany's economic system into entire dependence on international trade. The French plan is to be rejected, however, for two political reasons. The first is that nobody looking for a reasonable solution of the German problem that is also acceptable to the fair-minded Germans will favor the dismemberment of Germany, which the realization of the French proposal would involve. The second reason is that the international control under which the detached regions are to be put according to the French suggestion would answer the Russian prayer for getting a solid foothold in western Europe.

It is, indeed, impossible to separate the political from the economic side of the German problem. A child cannot be deprived

for all time of knives and scissors because it may do damage with them; the time has to come when it must be trained in adult habits. Once Germany has been restored by a radical political and intellectual conversion to the state of a normal nation, there will be no need to deprive her permanently of knives and scissors simply because these peaceful instruments are capable of being used as weapons. What is needed is an indirect economic disarmament that will lead further than the direct process; but this requires all the more radical political and intellectual conversion. Until this has been achieved, under our plan the Allies must hold all the threads in their hands, and during this period they will also be able to take all further measures of security needed for protection against any possible surprise.

But that, quite rightly, will not be considered enough; and in fact there is a very simple method, and a specifically economic one, of achieving the economic disarmament of Germany. We have just seen a tempting aspect of the French plan in the idea that it would drive Germany in the direction of peacefulness by increasing her international economic dependence. This does indeed seem the right path. But why produce that dependence in so mechanical and political a way, one burdened with all the problems of politics? Is there not an organic, specifically economic and eminently peaceful way of arriving at the same goal, and one, therefore, on which the Anglo-Saxon governments should be able to agree at once with the French?

This way may be found by the application of a principle that in the world of today surpasses every other in boldness and novelty, a principle more revolutionary than all socializations, all economic controls, and all Beveridge Plans put together—the principle of absolute and even, if necessary, one-sided free trade. We should urgently recommend in all seriousness—in agreement, incidentally, with Professor F. A. Hayek (*The Saturday Review of Literature*, June 23, 1945)—that the Allies impose on Germany virtually nothing more than a single measure of economic compulsion, namely, entire freedom of economic intercourse with foreign countries, and that they bring this German free trade into effect the moment the settlement of

the most urgent currency and financial issues permits. It need scarcely be added that for the present this German free-trade area could not, for obvious reasons, include the territory occupied by the Russians.

There are a number of other details that ought to be carefully considered. One of these would be the necessity of protecting this free-trade Germany against discriminatory import restrictions of a prohibitive nature. To this end we suggest that all countries grant to Germany unconditional most-favored-nation treatment, and that a special body of the United Nations act as an international authority exercising supervision and arbitrating in the event of conflicts of opinion.

We are probably safe in assuming that today the majority of people the world over will tremble at the daring of such an idea, since they have been brought up to believe in the economic blessings of protection and see in free trade the road to a country's inescapable ruin. To these people we need only say that here they have a unique opportunity of testing the truth of their dogma by actual experiment on a nation that has already been the victim of worse experiments and would not dream for a moment of exchanging this organic method of economic disarmament, with its appeal to their energy and their inventive faculties, for the destructive method of industrial dismantling or the political smashing of economic ties. Should the protectionists, however, be right, and should free trade severely impair Germany's economic system, there will be those who find comfort in that consequence because it is just what they want, while other people will have to remind themselves that the result could not have been any worse if the other methods of economic disarmament had been continued.

The minority who do not adhere to the present-day world religion of economic nationalism, however, will have other expectations. Undoubtedly transition to free trade in the present-day world of triumphant protectionism will compel the Germans to bring into play exceptional resourcefulness, adaptability, and abstinence; but in comparison with what they have to go through today that will be easy to bear. People who pass

their lives in cellars or wander aimlessly along the highroads will be the last to be frightened by the prospect of having to change their occupation or place of work, of having to work with tireless energy, of having to seek the most careful adaptation to the requirements of foreign markets, and of living for a time on short commons, in order to pave the way to economic recovery that is promised by free trade and the integration in international commerce that it implies. Once the fetters are removed at home and abroad, they will not make a great song over sacrifices of which they see the sense.

Undoubtedly there will also be some opposition abroad to an experiment in a direction so uncongenial to protectionists, and the objection might grow with the success of the experiment. But there might be a corresponding growth in its attractiveness. And should not such an experiment be particularly attractive to the United States, whose government is advocating the restoration of freedom of trade in the world market?

This policy of free trade will inflict a mortal blow in Germany at the very principle that has always underlain the aggressive German monopoly capitalism, with its overgrown heavy industries, from the time of Bismarck's tariff of 1879—the principle of protectionism. The heavy industries, with which, of course, economic disarmament has first to concern itself, would automatically, from rational economic considerations, and therefore for the good of Germany and of the world, be reduced to the dimensions that today are being aimed at through pure destruction. West Germany would be brought into entire dependence on international trade, and, in contrast to the impossible Potsdam decisions, would be converted not into a poverty-stricken, self-supplying agricultural country, but into a region uniting an intensive, highly developed agriculture, dependent on imports of foodstuffs, with a highly specialized industry, depending on exports. It would become a sort of enlarged Belgium, and with its extreme dependence on foreign trade it would have to abandon any idea of building up an "autarchic" war industry.

This would be the constructive solution of the problem of economic disarmament, instead of the destructive one—a solu-



tion by means not of the isolation and impoverishment of Germany, but of a prosperity that stands or falls with the interweaving of German industry with international trade. The productivity of west Germany—without which neither the Germans, who without it must starve or depend on international charity, nor the rest of Europe can dispense—would be preserved from further senseless destruction. It would be interesting to observe the results that this revolutionary experiment in liberalism would have on the collectivist world of the East, and, indeed, on the collectivists of the whole world. It is clear, finally, to everyone familiar with the circumstances that the problem of the German cartels, to which the Americans especially attach full importance, would of itself be solved, since cartels presuppose a protectionist system.

Once more let us say that this plan should be able to count on the special sympathy of the Americans, who would secure under it the opportunity of regaining much of the moral terrain that they seem to have lost in the parts of Germany they occupy. But should we not be concerned above all with the consideration that it would be particularly appropriate for a nation that has become so deeply involved in the sin of nationalism to make, with free trade, this beginning in the stemming of nationalism? That Germany should thus be given the opportunity of expiating her guilt by setting an example in the uttermost renunciation of nationalism?

So much for the foreign-trade aspect of the economic reform. The *third* point that deserves special emphasis is the frankly *anticollectivist character of this reform*, and the further fact that such a reform therefore runs counter to the popular idea that it is exactly the misery in Germany that makes socialism the only solution. This idea, indeed, betrays a most singular confusion. If Germany were a besieged fortress where a limited supply of goods had to be evenly distributed, something might be said for a kind of socialism that is nothing else but the "administration of misery." The problem, however, is not the just distribution of given supplies, but the increase of these desperately insufficient supplies by production. To this end

we can have no use for any kind of such "poorhouse socialism." What we need is the restoration of the market economy, which alone, as we saw, is able to release the forces of production and to bring order into the terrible chaos of the German economy. There are two facts that even the socialist ought finally to admit. The first is that it is precisely a socialist economic order—in the technical sense of an economic order that replaces the regulating functions of the price system by governmental command—under which the Germans have been living for fourteen years, so that those whom such a statement surprises resemble the Monsieur Jourdain in Molière's comedy who is astonished to hear that he has spoken prose all his life. The other fact on which no disagreement ought to be possible any longer is that the present catastrophe of the German economy is essentially the breakdown of this socialist economic order. The whole system of coercive measures practiced so far in the western zones has become absolutely insufficient for the purpose of managing production and distribution by the orders of the authorities and it is highly dubious whether even the terror of Himmler could have coped any longer with this situation. The whole machinery of regimentation and distribution has collapsed so completely that the authorities are powerless against the black markets, the barter system, and all other ways in which the economic life in Germany has reacted to "repressed inflation" and collectivism. The products of entire industries in Germany—e.g., of the cutlery industry at Solingen—are now streaming into the "unofficial" markets, while through ordinary channels not a single knife is to be had. That is the naked truth, which even the most doctrinaire socialist should now admit. In reality, there is hardly any other country in the world where socialism has become so utterly an inapplicable policy as in Germany, and there is no more absurd confusion than to react to the fearful breakdown of the socialist system in Germany by the cry for more socialism. We ought to add that under the present conditions also the policy aiming at dissolving monopolies (cartels, concerns, etc.) is meaningless, for as long as there is planning and collectivism in Germany

nothing substantial is changed, except that now the functions of the former private monopoly are taken over by state monopolies, and the plate on the office door bears a different name. Nothing is acting more powerfully for monopoly than the present collectivist system in Germany, especially as the state monopolies are not subject to the new antimonopoly laws. In order to illustrate again what this system means we quote the recent statement that in Great Hesse (American zone) the total number of employed, compared with 1938, diminished by about 13 per cent, while the number of office workers increased by 15 per cent.

If it is the acme of confusion to ask for socialism today in Germany on economic grounds, there is no less confusion in doing so on political grounds and arguing that because private industry has been misused by the state under National Socialism, it now has to be taken over by the state entirely. It is a paradoxical fact that there is a drive for nationalization of industries in Germany in order to make things more difficult for a new tyrant. There are, indeed, many in Germany who sincerely believe that the more powerful they make the state, the farther away they get from totalitarianism. They seem to count on a better future by making the state, which is already governing them, which is already their policeman, their jailer, their teacher, their judge, and what not, now also their manufacturer, their coal merchant, their doctor, their insurance agent, their banker. Strangely enough, they seem to be convinced that the worker will have more freedom when, after thorough nationalization, he will have to face only one single employer, i.e., the state, which happens to be identical with the police and the penal courts. In doing so, these people are unable to draw the logical conclusion from the fact that they just got rid of the vilest tyranny of history. They do not realize that the formidable problem of our times is the leviathan of omnipotent government, whose power must be diminished, not increased. Socialism and nationalization only add enormously to this power, while private industry, competition, free farmers, federalism, free trade unions, and free co-operatives are so many means to

diminish that power by presenting counterweights. If the German workers are freely organized in private industries and educated in the philosophy of liberty, they may present an effective obstacle for any new Hitler clad in whatever fashionable political garments. However, the nationalization of key industries would simply mean that such a new Hitler would not even be compelled to go out of his way to find stupid or unscrupulous industrialists and to bamboozle them; he would only have to shout at cowering government officials managing the nationalized industries. Whoever ran the government in such an economy would possess, from the outset, a degree of power of which Hitler could not dream in the first years of his regime.

We just said that free trade unions might be a welcome counterweight against the all-powerful state. When considering the present conditions in Germany, however, we have to qualify this statement. The truth is that, because of the lack of experienced leaders and of the aloofness of the mass of the German workers, even in the western zones the trade unions have come more and more under communist influence. Unfortunately, the Allied authorities have done everything to bolster up the trade unions in the name of democracy and to give them political functions and a social prestige that are cynically being exploited by the agents of "eastern democracy."

Finally, we want to say a word in order to defend our program against the possible objection that it amounts to a *defeatist abandonment of the eastern zone to Soviet Russia*. Nothing is further from our minds, and we would regret any word that could give rise to such a misunderstanding. We must realize, however, that it has been exactly the fear of letting eastern Germany go that has frustrated every constructive policy in Germany and brought the western zones into a state of misery that has made quite imminent the danger that the western Allies, by their efforts not to lose the eastern zone, might lose the western zone as well. By waiting indefinitely for a common policy with the Russians, the western Allies simply play the game of the latter, who, by exploiting the

western reluctance to act independently and obstructing any constructive policy in Germany, want to create conditions in western Germany that serve the communist propaganda. The furious criticism of the American-British merger by the Russians proves conclusively that by such a policy of combating the chaos in their own zones the western Allies are doing the exact opposite of what the Russians want them to do, while they are rubbing their hands in grim satisfaction whenever it is urged that in the western zones nothing must be done that deepens the gulf between west and east. Not to leave eastern Germany to her fate might well mean in the end to leave the whole of Germany to her fate, because such an attitude makes it possible for the Russians to stultify any reconstruction in western Germany. The only possible policy, instead, is to make at long last a beginning in the western zones and there to create a nucleus of order, productivity, freedom, and prosperity. By using the word "nucleus" we want to express our idea that everything should be done to extend this sphere to eastern Germany. There ought to be a standing invitation to the Russians to join the nucleus on terms that apply the western principles to the east instead of applying the eastern principles to the west. The Germans in the Russian zone—who, by the incomprehensible decisions made at Teheran and Yalta, are condemned to live under an unspeakable regime of terror, plunder, rape, and syphilis—ought to be told every day that we are always thinking of them and to be fortified in their endurance. While the present shyness to tell the truth about the eastern zone to the Germans in the western zones should be abandoned, all channels ought to be used to spread in the eastern zone the news about the conditions in the "nucleus." But first, of course, there must be created such a "nucleus" of prosperity and freedom the news of which is worth being spread about. Then we shall see what will happen. In other words: what we recommend is really a policy of *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

It is, of course, to be expected that the Russians and their Communist puppets will have the singular impertinence of denouncing us as villains who want to split Germany into two

parts. I have personal experience with this well-known strategy, since the Russian press has already attacked me fiercely on that score, adding the savory indictment that I want "to make of a separate western Germany a colony of foreign monopoly capitalism." I answered that I am the first to regret that, by decisions the responsibility for which has to be borne by other men, this split of Germany has been a reality since 1945. Then I said: I quite agree with my Communist critics that the aim ought to be to reunite the two parts, our only slight difference being that I prefer the reunion by the west and under its principles to a reunion by the east and under its principles. Should the representatives of the east obstruct this policy, I must regretfully blame them for wanting "to make of a separate eastern Germany a colony of foreign monopoly capitalism." Finally I proposed that the Germans, after having learned the full truth about the conditions in the eastern as in the western zones, ought to be invited to express their opinion as to whether they prefer an extension of the conditions reigning in the east to the whole of Germany, a proposal that seemed to me the right answer to the Communist maneuver of asking for a German plebiscite on the reunion of the two parts and the establishment of a central government in Berlin. Once the west has been made a nucleus of prosperity and freedom, we can safely ask for a plebiscite on whether these conditions shall be extended to the east and whether the two parts of Germany shall be thereby reunited or not.

#### OTHER URGENT REFORMS

So much for economic reform. On the other three reforms that ought to be carried through at once, without any regard to the eventual outcome of the pending peace conference, we can be very brief, since the underlying ideas are simple and familiar to many people.

Closely related to the economic reform in Germany would be a *deflation of Allied administration*, which ought to be as drastic as that of the German currency. This deflation is possible and necessary. It is *possible* once the whole formidable machinery

of questionnaires, licenses, controls, and what not has been reduced to the utmost minimum, according to our program of economic reforms, and once the Allied administration has been limited to the task of merely controlling the German administration of the country. The deflation of Allied administration is also *necessary* for various pressing reasons. There is the need to cut the crushing expenses of the occupation and to restrict the personnel of the Allied administration to a select and well-paid body of the very ablest. But the administrative deflation will also be the highly necessary means of reducing the possibility of undesirable frictions between the occupants and the Germans and of ending a practice that is poisoning their relations more than anything else, the practice of requisitioning houses. As time goes on and the psychological reactions of the Germans become more normal after the initial shock, the present system of occupation in Germany will appear less and less tenable, at least in the eyes of nations that stand for ideals opposite to totalitarianism. The aim now would be to make the occupation as invisible and yet as efficient as possible, which does not preclude Germany from remaining a country where, as far as it is deemed necessary, large military units are being stationed.

Hardly less urgent would appear another reform that, at the same time, would make it easier to deflate the Allied administration. We are thinking of the present policies of denazification, which many competent observers would not hesitate to call one of the biggest failures of the Allied policy in Germany, and which Professor Hayek, in a recent article of the *London Spectator*, has bluntly characterized as a policy of "renazification," because of the widespread resentment that the numerous injustices have created. There were never two opinions as to the necessity of bringing to justice all really responsible men, party members or not, and of disqualifying for any functions of a political character even those who failed only by weakness. But it was always difficult to see the interest of the Allies in increasing by their "denazification" the number of desperate and brooding outcasts in Germany instead of being satisfied

with the millions of eastern refugees. It was no less difficult to understand why the Allies—among them particularly the Americans—were eager to carry through, by their injudicious policies of denazification, a social revolution that dispossesses whole classes as in eastern countries and that deprives the country of a large part of the available entrepreneurial ability and technical skill that are so badly needed. It is, for instance, a pity that so many doctors joined the party, but why must now the population suffer for it by being deprived of competent doctors? The matter becomes a real farce when eastern refugees, in many cases the worst Nazis, take in western Germany the place of former party members because for lack of documents nothing can be proved against them. Thus in Bavaria thousands of peasant children are now being taught by teachers coming from Silesia, a fact that anybody knowing Bavaria will appreciate in all its savory aspects. It is to be feared that it is already too late to remedy the untold harm done by these policies, but that makes it all the more urgent to change them at once and to make good what still can be mended. As a rough guide for the right policy it would appear useful to distinguish between three main groups of Germans: (1) the minority of the chief responsible persons, (2) the minority of proved anti-Nazis, and (3) the majority of the more or less weak, more or less ignorant, more or less docile, more or less stupid, in other words the great mass of the human average who are neither scoundrels nor even remotely heroes or saints. It has always seemed reasonable and it still is certainly to hit the first group with the utmost severity, to honor the members of the second group and make them run the country, and finally to give the preponderant remainder of the Germans a chance under the joint leadership of the anti-Nazis and the Allies. It is understood that nobody who has taken any active part in the Nazi regime or proved easily accessible to Nazism—which is not necessarily identical with having been a party member—can be entrusted with a university chair or any other function of high political, social, juridical, or educational responsibility.

The fourth step ought to be the immediate *removal of the intellectual embargo* that ever since 1945, or even since 1933,



has been isolating the German mind from the outside world. Since any solution of the German question depends on breaking down this isolation and on our success in making the Germans think essentially on the same lines with the other countries of the West, it is one of the strangest aspects of the Allied policy in Germany that so far next to nothing has been done to satisfy the hunger for mental food that in Germany is as sorely felt as the physical hunger. It is pathetic to see how leading men in Germany seem to be out of touch with any of the currents of thought outside of Germany and how people are groping in the dark simply because of this lack of mental orientation, and it is a sad reflection to think what could have been done with the German mind since 1945 if there had been promptly organized what has been properly called "Intellectual Relief for Germany." But it is also encouraging to visualize what still can be done if finally the means are found to send those carloads of books and periodicals and newspapers to Germany for which we have been praying all the time.

#### THE POLITICAL SHAPE OF GERMANY

These are, it seems to us, the four reforms most urgent today, and they are reforms that can be carried through without our having to wait for a formal peace treaty with Germany. This is all the more important since it is hard to see at the present moment how such a peace treaty is to come into existence and how it could make sense.

First of all, where is the German partner for such a treaty? There is no German government and there is nothing in sight even remotely resembling it, unless we mean by government some irresponsible committee that we pompously call such while betraying our western notions of a legitimate representative democratic government. Here we come to a difficulty whose deeper reasons are not always understood. Before we apply too rashly our notions of democracy to Germany we must remember that the German people, always one of the least talented in politics, having shown its lack of maturity by being bamboozled by Hitler, has, by twelve years of satanical totalitarian-

ism, been ground to a pulp of men from whom very little independent judgment or constructive thinking can be expected. There is no genuine and informed public opinion in Germany, and as yet nothing remotely resembling an articulate political life. Therefore the very foundations of modern democracy are sadly lacking in that country, and it would be disastrous to carry through any make-believe policies disregarding this lamentable fact. The democratic belief that the people are wise and virtuous, however well founded elsewhere, is certainly utterly inapplicable in Germany today. And yet there is no real reason to despair, provided we are able to restrain our impatience to run that country on the lines of modern mass democracy. Certainly there are a good many who believe that after vigorous denazification the only thing to do is to organize the great political parties, carry through elections for these parties, teach them some elementary tricks of democracy, have governments elected by such parties, ask the German people what kind of constitution they want, have an austere paternal eye on what the Germans are up to, encourage perhaps the trade unions and similar institutions—and then hope for the best. The more sophisticated, shrinking from the none too heartening prospect of getting at best a second edition of the unfortunate Weimar Republic, will perhaps add that this Fourth Reich should be given a federate character.

A most serious warning must be given against such views. Let us repeat that there is no real solution of the German problem without a thorough change in the political and ideological framework that finally made possible the Third Reich. This framework has been the German Reich, which in fact was a Greater Prussia, together with the mentality that we associate with names like Friedrich II, Bismarck, and Treitschke. A genuine reconditioning of the average German—including the socialists—supposes therefore that the old highly centralized and Prussianized Reich be replaced by a new political structure re-emphasizing the non-Prussian traditions of western and southern Germany, which were much repressed and corrupted by Prussian leadership. A thoroughly new start must be made by

building up a new Germany from the bottom up to the top, that is, from the democratic self-government of the municipalities and regional districts through the autonomy of the different German states up to the final stage of a German federation. The three overwhelming reasons for German federalism are that (1) it is good for the Germans because it is the best means for their re-education, (2) it is good for Europe because it makes Germany weak for aggression while leaving her defensive strength, and (3) it is bad for Communist Russia because it deprives her of the main instrument of dominating Germany.

This process of building up a new Germany from the bottom to the top must be taken literally. It must really begin at the bottom, in the smallest geographical units, and then work its way upward. It is obviously all wrong to do things the other way round by first creating a new German Reich and then giving it a federate character by writing it into the constitutional charter. In such a way we shall arrive only at a sham federalism. The experiment was made at Weimar in 1919, and nobody in his senses wants to repeat it. It is simply putting the cart before the horse. Once you open this door to the Germans, all those who are still intoxicated by the spirit of Berlin will rush to the corral of a new centralized and Prussianized Germany, ridding themselves as soon as possible of the inconvenient impediments of self-government and decentralization, and in this stampede the others will be dragged along in the headlong course toward the corral. Very quickly we would be exactly where we were before, counting the years until some new nationalist prophet carried these huddled masses off their feet.

The usual objection that possibly we might not find a majority of Germans now to accept such a policy of gradual and decentralized democracy betrays a topsy-turvy thinking. The German question is precisely how to reshape this country, which once voted largely for Hitler, and to restore it into a healthy state so as to make sure that it will no longer be obsessed by a mentality that idealizes a centralized and Prussianized Reich and decries the non-Prussian traditions and values as unpa-

triotic or reactionary. 'As our guiding post for the task of curing this sick country we cannot take a state of mind that is exactly the one it must be our aim to cure. The German people today may indeed be compared to an extremely sick man tossing restlessly on his mattress and having only a blurred vision of what is going on around him. He is hardly the man to decide by his vote on the right cure to take. This comparison helps us to understand also why the Germans today are extremely fickle in their political opinions and highly susceptible to all sorts of influences or to the ever changing situation.

If we want a really democratic government in Germany it is therefore hard to see how we can get one for a long time to come. It is even more difficult to see how a government that really reflects German public opinion would be able to sign that sort of peace treaty which Germany must expect to-day. But even supposing there were a legitimate democratic government in Germany and further supposing that it would sign the peace treaty, it is most difficult of all to see how, in face of the utmost unpopularity it must expect, it could remain long a legitimate and democratic government. Then it becomes clear that the whole elaborate procedure of making a peace treaty with Germany would be useless for the Allies—except for that power which is speaking of a peace treaty with a German government while all the time it is thinking of the German equivalent of the Lublin government that might be formed in order to sign the treaty. That power throughout its vacillating policy never loses sight of the chance of cajoling the Allies and the Germans into a situation that would deliver to itself the key position in world politics that Germany represents.

Let us speak out the plain truth that this indeed is the game. Is the Lublin trick that went so well in Poland possible in Germany? There is no gainsaying the fact that there is much to encourage the Russians in such a belief. They know that nothing serves them better than the obliging readiness of the western Allies and the Germans to play together with the Russians this fantastic game of centralizing as far as possible

the political and intellectual life of Germany in Berlin, a city that now lies within gunshot of the Polish frontier and has become practically inaccessible to the average German. With the exception of the Social Democratic party of Dr. Schumacher, all the German mass parties now have their headquarters in Berlin; together with the big dailies published in Berlin, they are the most important instruments for molding public opinion in Germany, and both are doing this in a way that corresponds to the vested interests they have in Berlin. Once the Social Democrats make Berlin also their headquarters, and once the great racket of centralizing the trade unions in Berlin under open or clandestine communist leadership succeeds, another great distance toward the German Lublin will have been covered. But if we still believe with Abraham Lincoln that you cannot fool all of the people all of the time, we must assume that this gigantic trickery will be found out sooner or later. The last chance has come now when the issue of the peace treaty with Germany is being used by the Russians to force a solution of the German problem that consists in setting up in Berlin a central German government that the Russians hope to be able to use as a lever for bringing under their influence the whole of Germany and consequently the whole of Europe.

It is obvious that the power that insists on a highly centralized German government, in spite of all the risks of re-creating thereby a strong Germany, would not do so if it had not good reason for hoping to get thus the trump card in the German poker game. Everyone helping in bringing about this centralist German government with Berlin as its capital ought to know that by doing so he is helping the Russians to get that trump card. In order to see quite clearly on this point of the role of Berlin we would do well to compare it with the situation of Trieste today and to speak of a *Spreec-Triest*. The Italians feel sentimentally attached to Trieste even more than the Germans to Berlin, and yet nobody in his senses would dream of making it the capital of Italy. And the case of Berlin is even infinitely worse than that of Trieste, since it lies entirely within the

Russian orbit, and since even within the city the Russian influence is preponderant.

The Russian maneuver is very clever, particularly for the reason that it makes cynical use of the appeal to a sort of misguided German patriotism that has always seen its ideal in a centralized German Reich under Prussian leadership. Unfortunately, the western Allies have done next to nothing so far to give a new aim to German patriotism and to make a federal Germany attractive. But now it becomes clear that the Russians are going too far in bamboozling the Germans and the Allies. For now that a central German government is to be smuggled into Berlin together with a peace treaty, elementary human psychology leads us to expect that every German patriot will reject this idea. The western Allies have no reason to regret this. Among their spokesmen it has been Mr. Murphy who has had the very good sense, from the beginning of the peace negotiations, to suggest that instead of a peace treaty there should be a unilateral act of the Allies declaring the new peace status for Germany.

We believe indeed that all sensible people now agree that we ought to reject the idea of a peace treaty with Germany at this moment because it would mean a treaty with a German government that as yet does not exist and that would have to be created for the express purpose of committing suicide. The idea of declaring unilaterally the peace status for Germany offers a practical alternative. However, it has two drawbacks. First, such a declaration still supposes an addressee, and until this has been defined it will dangerously be supposed that the addressee of a declaration of peace for Germany will be a central German government to come. Second, a mere declaration of peace, while creating a more normal status for Germany from the point of view of international law, would fail to give any more shape to the internal structure of Germany, which cannot forever remain in its present fluid condition, and it would also fail to set some definite aim for the comprehensible desire of the Germans to know in what sort of political framework they will have to live. Both drawbacks would work

to the advantage of the Russians. The first would give them ample opportunity to insist on creating the addressee for the declaration of peace, that is, their German Lublin government. The second drawback would leave the Russians the tremendous advantage over the western Allies of having the monopoly of setting a definite and positive aim for the political ambitions of the Germans by dangling before their eyes the glittering lure of some new centralized "Reich."

Therefore, a mere declaration of peace as the alternative to the Russian idea of a peace treaty is not enough. It is suggested here that all birds might be killed with one stone by a slightly different solution. This would consist in applying the example of the proposed treaty with Austria to the *several German states*, which now ought to be formally created and defined. This means that *with each of these states the Allies would conclude a treaty in which, under essentially uniform conditions, the state of peace would be declared with regard to each of these states*. Like the autonomy of Austria, which comes to life again after nine years, the autonomy of the several German states would now after nine times nine years (1866) be presumed to revive. And just as in the case of Austria, it would be inferred that between the Allies and the several German states there never was a legal state of war that had to be terminated by a formal peace treaty of a constitutive character. If this policy of concluding treaties declaring peace with the several German states could not be carried through in common with the Russians, nothing should prevent the western Allies from concluding such treaties with the states lying in their own zones.

What we suggest, then, is that the moment that gives peace to Germany ought to be also the moment when the German states will be reborn and given final shape. When it now comes to the task of fixing the number of the German states and their boundaries we ought to follow the principle of respecting the boundaries of the historical German states as far as these have finally come to represent sizable units based on common ties of tradition, dialect, and regional character. There can be no question of resuscitating petty principalities, but we must

equally beware of cutting out artificial administrative units like the French departments created overnight by the French Revolution. Whenever the present zonal boundaries run right across the historical German states that we feel we have to respect, this is a forceful reason to adapt the zonal boundaries to those of the German states and thus to correct something that never ought to have been done and that has done tremendous harm to the federal sentiments of the Germans. The occupying powers thereby affected can accept these rearrangements all the easier as the administrative reform we envisage would make it rather immaterial anyhow whether this or that power is responsible for the more or less invisible supervision of that particular region, at least west of the Russian demarcation line. If each occupying power should regard its zone as a sort of European colony that has a prestige value that can be ruthlessly exploited and whose "natives" can be baptized according to the political religion prevailing at home, we had better admit right away that the German question is insoluble.

With these principles in mind, we propose to re-establish formally as autonomous German States: (1) Bavaria (within her frontiers of 1933, including the Palatinate), (2) Württemberg (within her frontiers of 1933), (3) Baden (within her frontiers of 1933), (4) Great Hesse, as it has been created under the American administration, (5) the Rhineland and Westphalia, (6) Lower Saxony (including the former Prussian province of Hanover and the former states of Oldenburg, Lippe, and Brunswick), (7) Schleswig-Holstein (including the Oldenburg enclaves), (8) Mecklenburg (consisting of both Mecklenburgs), (9) Brandenburg (consisting of all that remains of Prussia east of the Elbe, of Anhalt, and of the province of Saxony, with the exception of the Regierungsbezirke of Merseburg and Erfurt), (10) Saxony (including the Prussian Regierungsbezirk of Merseburg), (11) Thuringia (including the Prussian Regierungsbezirk of Erfurt), (12) the free cities of Hamburg, Lübeck, and Bremen, and (13) the federal district of Frankfurt-am-Main, which would become the capital of the United States of Western Germany.



While creating these German states with which treaties after the Austrian model would be signed, we would have to determine at the same time the minimum of co-ordination between them that is necessary. Of the two types of co-ordination that are familiar, the looser one (confederation, *Staatenbund*) has been proposed by the French, while the closer one (federation, *Bundesstaat*) is being favored by the American and British governments. It seems obvious to us that a realistic interpretation of the present situation in Germany suggests a compromise between the two proposals. While all the states belonging to the three western zones (1-7, 12, and 13) would be combined in a federation (*Bundesstaat*) called the United States of Western Germany with Frankfurt as its capital, and while we must leave it to the Russians what they intend to do in their own zone, we would have to test by experience the possibility of co-ordinating the West German Federation with the states of the Russian zone in a sort of loose confederation of the French design. Whereas the government of the German states would be left now entirely to the Germans, it would be subject, within the western zones, to the control of the federal government in Frankfurt, which would have toward the governments the same competences as the Swiss government toward the different cantons. For an as yet indeterminate time, the federal government in Frankfurt would be closely supervised by the western Allies. As long as there will be no confederation between the West German Federation and the states of the Soviet zone, the Control Council would continue to do the co-ordinating as best it could. This and the Frankfurt government would execute the conditions of peace by exercising their rights over the German states. If the machinery thus created looks somewhat complicated, we must not forget that this is also an advantage because of its checking influence on any new German ambitions.

All this is frankly a counterproposal answering the Russian maneuvers. This should appear as a considerable merit unless we still adhere to the opinion that we must leave all the proposing and all the touchiness to the Russians. It will be very awkward for them to find that after all the western Allies have an idea

of their own about how to solve the German question. It is possible that, after one of those wild struggles, the Russians will come to terms with the western Allies so that our present proposals can be carried out by mutual good will and understanding. It is also possible, however, that no agreement of this sort can be reached with the Russians. In this case, the western Allies would have to choose between surrendering once more to the Russians and carrying through their German policies without the blessing of the Russians. But, in fact, there cannot be any hesitation, for to surrender now in the last round about Germany would mean to sacrifice Europe to the mirage of unity with the Russians. It would mean nothing less than the suicide of the West for fear of death.

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